

Sumter to Appomattox



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

www.americancivilwar.asn.au

Patron: Prof the Hon Bob Carr

President's Message

Dear Round Table members,

For those of you who were not at the last meeting, I told the assembly that I had suffered a stroke on 24 March 2022. The good news is that I have pretty much recovered. I can now walk again and my handwriting has returned, albeit with a childish look about it.

I received good feedback after our last meeting with Bob Carr as our guest speaker. Very gratifying.

I expect the next meeting to also be excellent with Peter Zacharatos and Dan Howard exploring the legality, or otherwise, of secession. It was never tested except by force of arms.

I look forward with anticipation to our next gathering of friends.

Ian McIntyre

Our Next Meeting

Monday, 8 August at 7pm.

You are welcome to have dinner at the Roseville Club from 6pm.

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

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Our Topic: 'Secession – Was it Illegal or Legal?'



This was one of the defining points of disagreement between the North and the South. In the absence of any specific provision in the Constitution, it was a hotly contested area. The US Constitution of 1787 was only 73 years old when Abraham Lincoln was elected in 1860. The population and geographical size of the Union had dramatically increased in the meantime. Having voluntarily *joined* the Union, were States entitled to voluntarily *leave* that Union?

Lincoln was certain that secession was illegal. Jefferson Davis was certain that it was legal. It took a Civil War to settle the issue, or did it? The very same question still resonates today with a number of authors having postulated a possible break-up of the Union in our times.

Two of our lawyer members will make a joint presentation on this issue - Peter Zacharatos will present the arguments why secession was illegal. Dan Howard will present the arguments why secession was legal. You can be the judge - who knows, our members may even decide the issue once and for all! Talk commences 7pm.

Our Last Meeting

Presentation by our esteemed Patron Bob Carr: A House Divided – Today's America



Members and guests were warmly welcomed to this special meeting by Roundtable President Ian McIntyre, who also invited guests to register as Members of the Roundtable. Life Member, Len Traynor, then introduced our Patron, Bob Carr, whose presentation was titled "A House Divided – Today's America" with its implied connection to the Civil War period.



Bob's talk was a tour de force, using lessons of the Civil War era as a springboard to a discussion of some of the deep-seated problems that bedevil today's America.

Bob emphatically rebutted the suggestion of some historians that slavery was only a secondary issue - in fact, the war had everything to do with slavery.

Bob referred to Bruce Catton's influential 3-volume book on the causes of the Civil War. Catton chose, as the starting point for his analysis of the key events leading to Civil War, the Democratic Convention in Charleston in the summer 1860 when the party, tired of

compromise, chose to split because the Southern Democrats preferred this to electing what they termed "a Northern Compromiser" (Stephen Douglas). The result, as they had expected, was the election of a Republican candidate, leading to the Southern Democrats' decision to secede.

Bob agreed with Catton's assertion that "the capacity to compromise in America had been exhausted". Bob referred to a number of key events of the 1850s leading up to the Civil War but focused particularly on the battle over the Fugitive Slave Act. In his view, this Act was capable of generating violence, not just in Kansas-Nebraska but even in Boston because, by putting an escaped slave on trial in the North, the ire of abolitionists was aroused and often led to violent confrontations. Anti-slavery states of the North permitted the use of habeas corpus to free recaptured slaves from their captivity, so that they could be brought before a court for determination as to their status: was he or she a citizen of the United States under the constitution? Could an escaped slave become free in the North? If he couldn't, was complying with the Fugitive Slave Act in fact a device whereby slavery could be reintroduced into states such as New York that had long abolished it?

Even more controversially, when the Dred Scott decision was handed down in 1857 by a slaveowner-dominated Supreme Court, could this be allowed to stand? Would the next step by the Taney slaveowner-dominated Supreme Court be to pass a second Dred Scott case to re-legitimise slavery in the North? Fear of such an outcome was one of the provocations for John Brown's reckless raid on Harpers Ferry, which in turn was taken as clear evidence by the South that "the North was bearing down on them".

The results of these two events - the Dred Scott case and John Brown's raid - fed into Southern states' fears of a slave rebellion and led, in turn, to the Democratic Convention and its decision, which resulted in the Party being split down the middle.

Bob then turned to today's America - is it heading towards another Civil War? He cited Pollster John Zogby who found that a plurality of Americans - 46% - thought that a Civil War was likely. Younger people were more likely to agree with this possibility - 53% - as were 49% of those in the South, compared with only 39% of those living in Eastern States.

Bob listed a number of other hot-button issues that are causes of deep controversy and division in America: race equity; gun control;

abortion; election legitimacy; the high levels of inequality and polarization, and issues related to health care. Added to this is America's "winner take all" politics - the belief that the other side "doesn't play fair"; the prevalence of guns; and the existence of private militias.

According to Zogby's Report, Civil War is not inevitable, but, in view of the fact that half the country believes it may occur means it is necessary to take the threat seriously.

Another view is that the United States is already in Civil War. There are two factors here:

First, the extreme polarisation – the exhaustion of the capacity to compromise – exemplified by the view that the Supreme Court has been thoroughly politicised and compromised and, according to the Democrats, radicalised compared with earlier periods when there were unanimous votes by Supreme Court Justices and their confirmation hearings in the Senate were not as contested as they are now. There is less "compromise across the aisle" in the House and the Senate. Members of Congress vote to oppose the other party, instead of in the best interests of the country, as was once more common and as happened, for example, with Lyndon Johnson's attempts, as Majority Leader of the Senate, to pass a Civil Rights Bill in the 1950s.

Second, this extreme polarization has now led to dysfunctionality and paralysis of government. The government should be able to resolve issues in the legislature through its mandate to get programs passed with some compromise. This occurred, for example, when Roosevelt enacted the New Deal. However, this ability seems to have ended with Newt Gingrich. This dysfunctionality could lead to a breakdown in law and order, according to several U.S. Generals, who speak of the need to prepare for this possibility in the event of a contested 2024 Presidential election.

If there were to be a Civil War, might it not be more like 'the Troubles' of Northern Ireland rather what happened in 1861 with the decision of the South to secede? Looking forward 50 or 100 years, can it be envisaged that the U.S. would come apart as the Soviet Union did? There is the possibility of different areas separating and become self-governing, for example, the Northeast, with its greater migrant population, engagement with globalization and export opportunities. Another area might be a Central and South U.S.A. bloc, including the Rust Belt, led by Texas. A third bloc might consist of western America, that is, California, Oregon and Washington with its creativity,

industrial inventiveness and import-export possibilities.

Another important consideration for an unravelling state is: does it have nuclear weapons? Speculating further about an America that comes undone – a country that is so polarised and so dysfunctional that any capacity for compromise has been exhausted – is there a plan post-2024 to deal with armed militias and other threats?

A further concern is what could happen to America's commitment to its role in the world and its international personality. What could happen if irreconcilable domestic anxieties tear it apart? What might happen regarding what Gareth Evans refers to as "the DLP" rules – its Dominance, Leadership and Primacy? America may feel that these can be taken for granted now but what will its response be if it feels that its dominance is being threatened or surpassed? If it is dogged by domestic conflict, how far might it go to protect its primacy – a very loose concept – and how effective might its government's judgement be in relation to world issues such as diplomacy and the avoidance of war? This would be of great international concern.



The talk was very well-received by the large audience and was followed by a lively question-and-answer session. Our Secretary Dan Howard gave a speech of thanks during which Bob was presented with a gift – an antique bust of Abraham Lincoln, sourced from Len Traynor's amazing collection of artefacts from the Civil War era.

Our great thanks to Bob for this excellent and thought-provoking presentation.



Copies of our newsletter and membership applications were available for guests.

Civil War Profile

CIVIL WAR PROFILE – Lee's Warhorse 'TRAVELLER' (1857 – 1871)

With thanks to Dan Howard



Robert E Lee on Traveller

Robert E Lee was a lover of animals, and a fine horseman – a trait that ran in the family. His father was the famous commander of Continental Dragoons in the American Revolution, 'Light-horse Harry' Lee. In 1852, Robert E Lee was appointed by then U.S. Secretary of War Jefferson Davis to be Superintendent of the U.S. Military Academy and one of his notable achievements in that role was the emphasis he gave to equestrian instruction. Outstanding cavalry officers including JEB Stuart and Philip Sheridan were trained during Lee's term at West Point.

In his 2017 biography, *The Life and Legend of Robert E Lee*, Michael Korda relates a telling anecdote of Lee's love of animals:

"Lee's chaplain, The Reverend J William Jones, recounts how Lee, under heavy shell fire in an exposed position, ordered those around him to take cover, but himself walked out into the open despite explosions all around him, to pick up from the ground 'an unfledged sparrow' that had been blown out of a tree and return it gently to its nest."

Lee had a number of horses in the early years of the Civil War. His first horse, presented to him by the citizens of Richmond, Virginia, was a bay stallion appropriately named 'Richmond' but he behaved poorly in the company of other horses and Lee didn't like him. After riding him for a polite period of time, he sent him home, and replaced him with a roan gelding, but this turned out to lack the stamina required of a war

horse. Lee acquired a third horse, a chestnut mare named 'Lucy Long'. According to an article by Don Blazer (at Infohorse.com)

The general became very fond of the mare and called her "Miss Lucy." She was about 15.1 hands, a good mover with excellent conformation and good legs. But like the roan gelding, she simply did not have the strength to withstand the rigors of long, forced marches. Miss Lucy broke down after two years of service to the general, and she was sent to a farm to rest. While on the farm she was captured by Union troops, but was found again after the war in a public riding academy. One of Gen. Lee's friends bought the mare and had her shipped to the general's home. There she remained as a pleasure horse for family members and friends.

In 1862, Lee finally acquired his warhorse – one that he had long admired for its grace and beauty – a grey gelding. The origins of this horse prior to Lee acquiring it are related in an article by Carolyn S. Kazmierczak on Historynet (at <https://www.historynet.com/robert-e-lees-horse-traveller/>) as follows:

His sire was Grey Eagle, a 16-hand grey racehorse that was famous for running in a \$20,000 stake race in Louisville, Ky., in 1839. Grey Eagle sired numerous successful racehorses and saddle horses, and James W. Johnston, an appreciator of fine horse flesh, purchased a mare named Flora that had been bred to Grey Eagle, and had her shipped to his home in Greenbrier County, Va., where the colt was born in 1857. Johnston foretold the beast's Confederate affiliation by naming him Jeff Davis after the Mississippi senator who had gained fame in the Mexican War... This horse's superior qualities and fine breeding were revealed when he outperformed other top quality saddle horses at the Greenbrier County Fair in Lewisburg. Johnston entered him in the show when he was 2 years old and again at age 3. [The horse] took home blue ribbons in both shows.

A Confederate officer, Captain Joseph Broun, purchased the horse and named him 'Greenbriar'. On a couple of occasions Lee saw this horse and was greatly attracted by its qualities and once, when admiring the horse with Broun, Lee dropped something of a hint by referring to it as 'my colt'. Broun generously offered to give the horse to Lee, but Lee insisted on paying \$200 for it – to cover the \$175 Broun had paid for it, plus \$25 to allow for

the depreciation in the value of Confederate currency! Broun's brother, a Confederate Major, praised the horse for needing "neither whip nor spur...[he] would walk his five or six miles an hour over the rough mountain road of Western Virginia...such vim and eagerness did he manifest to go right ahead so soon as he was mounted." Lee called the horse "gentle, easy, comfortable", and he admired the horse's readiness to go down the road – a trait that Lee captured when he re-named the horse 'Traveller' – destined to become his legendary mount for the remainder of the Civil War.

Although somewhat highly strung and difficult, Traveller was brave in battle, especially at the front. Lee developed a strong bond with the horse and sat him well. According to an article '*Traveller and Robert E Lee*' by Cheryl Lutring (at https://www.artbycrane.com/horse_history_articles/tales/traveller_and_robert_e_lee.html) :

"Traveller...was renowned for his rapid, springy walk, good spirit, bold carriage, and his high and bouncy uncomfortable trot. But it is recorded that when General Lee was in the saddle the horse offered his smooth saddle gaits. Together they faced the bloody battles in every campaign of the army of Northern Virginia from Second Bull Run to the surrender at Appomattox. Lee relied heavily on the horse's amazing courage and great stamina during the long arduous campaigning days.

"At Spotsylvania, Traveller saved the general's life by rearing to let a whizzing Union cannon ball pass harmlessly under his body. After Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg, at midnight of his third day at the reins, Lee eventually was able to dismount but was so exhausted he could only fling his arms around Traveller's neck to prevent his weakened legs from buckling. Traveller remained motionless until his General recovered.

"After the Battle of Antietam, Lee sat astride Traveller for hours watching the retreating Confederate Army cross the river Potomac. Even the enemy army was impressed, and the Union General Carter wrote 'The sight of General Lee and his splendid war horse, Traveller, was a graven image in the heart of every red-blooded soldier no matter under which flag he fought.' "

Lee himself occasionally fell victim to Traveller's hot temperament. At Second Bull Run. Traveller 'spooked' and threw Lee, who fell against a tree stump. Lee broke both hands and had to

continue the campaign either in an ambulance or with a courier leading his horse.



A photograph of Lee and Traveller on campaign

On one famous occasion in the 1864 Wilderness campaign Lee briskly rode Traveller towards the exposed lines to lead from the front, but the soldiers of the Texas Brigade surrounded Traveller and shouted 'General Lee to the rear!', demanding Lee not endanger himself so.



A painting of Lee & Jackson's last meeting – Lee on Traveller, Jackson on 'Little Sorrell' (another story!)

Lee's affection for his horse was captured in a letter he wrote to his wife's cousin, in which he described Traveller this way:

"If I was an artist like you, I would draw a true picture of Traveller, representing his fine proportions, muscular figure, deep chest, short back, strong haunches, flat legs, small head, broad forehead, delicate ears, quick eye, small feet, and black mane and tail. Such a picture would inspire a poet, whose genius could then depict his worth, and describe his endurance of toil, hunger, thirst, heat and cold; and the dangers and suffering through which he has passed. He could dilate upon his sagacity and affection, and

his invariable response to every wish of his rider. He might even imagine his thoughts through the long night-marches and days of the battle through which he has passed."

At war's end after Appomattox, Lee rode Traveller back to Richmond. He would frequently go on long rides with Traveller through the countryside, seeking some solace after the war years of constant travail and hardship. Sometimes Lee's daughter Mildred would accompany him on Lee's previous mount, Lucy Long, whom Lee had kept.

The following story related by Mrs. S.P. Lee (daughter of General W. N. Pendleton) to Lee's son Robert, captures the extraordinary sympathy that existed between Lee and Traveller:

"One afternoon in July of this year, The General rode down to the canal-boat landing to put on board a young lady who had been visiting his daughters and was returning home. He dismounted, tied Traveller to a post, and was standing on the boat making his adieu, when someone called out that Traveller was loose. Sure enough, the gallant grey was making his way up the road, increasing his speed as a number of boys and men tried to stop him. General Lee immediately stepped ashore, called to the crowd to stand still, and advancing a few steps gave a peculiar low whistle. At the first sound, Traveller stopped and pricked up his ears. The General whistled a second time, and the horse with a glad whinny turned and trotted quietly back to his master, who patted and coaxed him before tying him up again. To a bystander expressing surprise at the creature's docility, the General observed that he did not see how any man could ride a horse for any length of time without a perfect understanding being established between them."

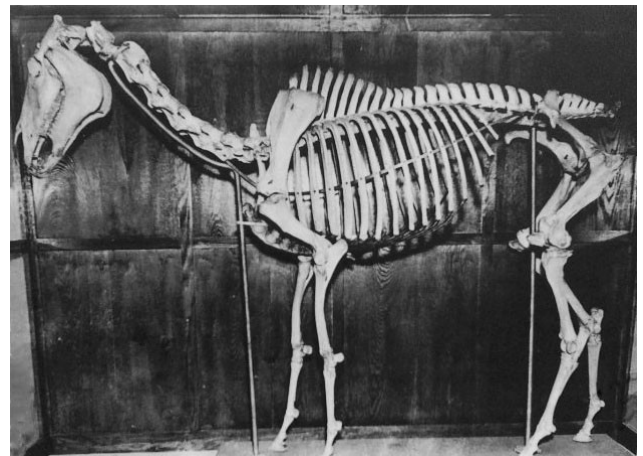
Lee eventually accepted the presidency of Washington College in Lexington, Virginia. He rode Traveller there, and the horse was allowed to graze around the campus. Lee was greatly admired by the students and other visitors who came to see him, and they so frequently souvenired hairs from Traveller's mane and tail, that Lee complained in a letter to his daughter that Traveller "is presenting the appearance of a plucked chicken."

Lee suffered a stroke and died in the fall of 1870. At his funeral, Traveller followed behind the ammunition cart that carried Lee's casket.

Lee was buried in the chapel at Washington College. A year later, Traveller stepped on a rusty nail and contracted tetanus and had to be put down. Traveller was buried close by the college chapel. According to an article on Lee and Traveller by Michael Roldan-Shaw (at <https://www.bluffton.com/general-robert-e-lee-celebrated-war-horse-traveller-lowcountry-connection/>) :

'Later an unknown person dug up the bones and put them on exhibition in New York. A sympathetic admirer paid to have them properly mounted and returned to Washington and Lee University. Despite being displayed in a museum, they were vandalized so constantly by students. Students carved their initials into the bones for good luck. Because of this, the skeleton was moved to the basement of Lee Chapel. It deteriorated for 30 years. Finally, in 1971, Traveller was laid to rest for good. This heap of hero's bones was placed in a wooden casket and buried a few feet from his master.'

There is a rather garish photo of Traveller's bones on display before they were finally laid to rest under a memorial plaque near the college chapel (below):



It seems fitting to finish this piece with a fine photograph of Lee in his last years mounted on Traveller:



Quiz Time

Answers to Len's Quiz Questions from our last newsletter:

1. Who did General Lee relieve as General-in-Chief of the Confederate Party?

This is a trick question. Lee was the only one appointed to this position (February 16, 1865).

2. What was the name of the Union ironclad instrumental in the capture of Island No. 10?

USS Carondelet

3. Where and when did the Confederate Peace Commissioners meet and who were they?

They met 15th Feb 1865 at City Point, Va. Members were Alex Stephens, Senator RMT Hunter and Judge Campbell.

4. General Sherman met President Lincoln only once in the course of the war. What was the date, the place and the name of the ship on which they met?

28th March 1865 at City Point Va. on the 'River Queen'.

Battle of Fredericksburg Quiz Answers

1. C
2. C
3. B
4. B
5. A
6. C
7. B
8. A
9. D
10. B
11. A

Comments by Quiz Creators (Saving America's Civil War Battlefields Civilwar.org):

10-11 Correct: *Congratulations on a Great Victory, General!*

8-9 Correct: *Well-Done, Colonel.*

6-7 Correct: *That was a Close One, Major.*

4-5 Correct: *You'll Do Better Next Time, Corporal.*

Less than 4 Correct: *Looks Like You're Still a Little "Green", Recruit.*

"Merch"



Our Keep-Kups are available to members and non-members

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

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