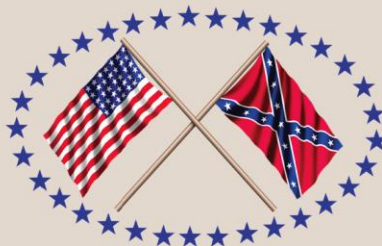


Sumter to Appomattox



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,

Welcome to 2023.

I missed the last meeting, our 2022 AGM, when it was postponed because Tom Keneally got the dreaded COVID at an inconvenient time. Nevertheless, it was reported to me that the evening was a great success and that Tom was a great guest speaker. I can also report that Paris at that time was very cold with some very negative temperatures, so I think your reported envy was misplaced. Sydney has got it about right at that time of the year.

Our Committee had a very good meeting on 30 January and settled on a strategy for programs for at least 2023 and probably 2024 as well. We are going to follow the timeline of the war year by year from 1861 to 1865. We will certainly deal with the main battles, but also prominent in each year will be the main difficulties each side experienced, the logistics situation each side encountered, the strategies in each year, and any interesting events of note that happened in the year in question. The Committee certainly enjoyed talking about the kinds of things that could be included. It may well work for our group as a whole. Let's try it.

Of course, if an opportunity to have an interesting guest speaker arises, we should suspend our strategy. However, I have been impressed by the presentations we have done from our internal resources and would like to see a broad cross section of the membership taking part and giving a ten-minute presentation a go. It does not need to be fancy or long.

I think it will be a good year,

Ian McIntyre
1st February 2023

Number 116 Jan. – Feb. 2023

Our Next Meeting

Monday, February 20th from 6.30pm

The Roseville Club

Topic: War's Timeline:

1861 – The opening stages of the War

Program Convenor's message: Proposed Agenda for 2023

2022 produced some genuinely outstanding presentations, many of them concerned with the causes, character and personalities of the war, culminating in our Christmas presentation by Tom Keneally. One of the outstanding features of last year was the number of presentations from members, and we are keen to see this continue.

As our President has explained, we have decided to return to some more traditional considerations – battles, developments and important events considered chronologically.

Let's continue with our usual format of a short (5-10 min) presentation or vignette (person, minor action, event) and a larger (30 min) presentation as the main feature. Our next two meetings beginning on 20th February, will cover 1861 – the opening stages of the War.

As usual, we are keen to hear from our membership so if you have a particular subject, please get in touch with John Morrison. Looking forward to a great 2023!

John Morrison
Program Director

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

Our Last Meeting

Special Guest Tom Keneally

Our Association was very privileged to have renowned author, Thomas Keneally, as our special guest at our Christmas meeting.



Tom spoke about his newly released book, *Fanatic Heart*, a 'grand tale' about the surprising connection between two Irish rebel friends condemned as convicts to Van Diemen's Land who both escaped to New York and founded a newspaper. Later, because of their differing viewpoints, they are involved in the American Civil War on opposite sides.

John Morrison, standing in for President Ian McIntyre who was unable to attend, opened the meeting and welcomed everyone. He then referred to his memory of Tom Keneally introducing each episode of the Ken Burns *Civil War* series in its first release. He remembers Tom referring to President Lincoln as "a quintessential mid-Western genius" and commenting that "one person you'll all come to love is Shelby Foote".

Dan was then called on to introduce Tom – a hard task, he said, because he needs no introduction. Tom, he said, is a magnificent Australian, an author of so many amazing works including a biography of Lincoln which was, according to Dan, a pithy, beautiful biography that captured the man.

Both Tom's grandfathers were Irish, and Tom has always displayed the spirit of the Irish, according to Dan, both through his writing and his social life, including being Inaugural Chairman of the Australian Republic Movement. He studied at a seminary for six years, decided against becoming a priest (but played one in a Fred Schepisi movie) and then went on to

becoming "the extraordinary, astonishing author that he is, including writing *Schindler's Ark*, which won the Booker". Dan also referred to Tom's long-term interest in the Civil War and the acclaimed books he has written on the topic. Dan then referred to Tom's AO (1983) and repeated that the Association was honoured by his presence and that he was 'a kindred spirit'.

Tom began by acknowledging the extraordinary presence of Mr. (Len) Traynor and commenting that he would spot all his mistakes but wished him "Good health and long life", which Len reciprocated.

Tom then outlined the story in his latest book *Fanatic Heart*, introducing us to John Mitchel, a Northern Irish dissenting Presbyterian, meaning that his father was a minister of the branch that didn't subscribe to any code.



John Mitchel, born November 3rd, 1815, in Derry

The British wanted this branch to be brought under control by subscribing to the Credo – the creed of Doctrine – but Northern Irish tended not to do this, including John's father. They were thus known as Dissenters. This was also the branch of Presbyterianism that Abraham Lincoln subscribed to.

Mitchel was not just a dissenting Presbyterian but a lawyer and editor of a seditious anti-British newspaper. Mitchel's friend and fellow insurrectionist Thomas Meagher, a Catholic from Waterford, was with others a co-editor of a newspaper.

The context of the events at the beginning of this book was the Irish famine. The British had reacted to the increasing famine in Ireland by sending not food but more troops, and John Mitchel, as a newspaper editor, had advised the starving Irish on how to derail trains carrying troops by setting up ambushes in culverts just before tunnels. As a result, in April 1848, he was arrested and sentenced to transportation to Van Diemen's Land and, that same day, was put on a ship in Dublin.

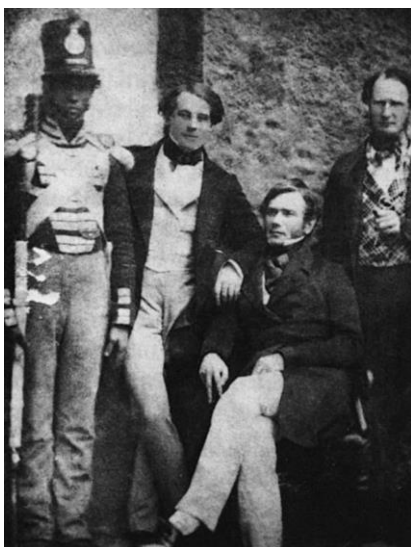
Mitchel had married Jenny Vernon in 1837 and she and their five children were left behind, with hopes of them joining him at some point.



Jane 'Jenny' Mitchel, nee Vernon

On the day of his sentence, it was anticipated that there might be a rescue attempt of this well-known patriot. His Northern Irish wife, Jenny, and another remarkable woman, Meagher's friend Jane Elgee, also known as the poet Speranza (and future mother of Oscar Wilde), hoped for an uprising that would free him, but this unfortunately did not occur. These women were revolutionaries, ahead of their time.

A later unsuccessful uprising occurred when a number of other Irish rebels, co-conspirators of Mitchel's, were arrested for sedition at the same time as Mitchel and were later shipped to Van Diemen's Land. One of these was Thomas Frances Meagher, a future Brevet Major-General in the Civil War.



Daguerrotype of Thomas Frances Meagher (2nd from left) in Kilmainham Goal, 1848)

After 15 months in solitary confinement at sea and in Bermuda and South Africa, John Mitchel arrived in Van Diemen's Land. Granted a ticket-

of-leave if he guaranteed not to escape, he settled down as a convict in Bothwell and was later joined by Jenny and the children.

His friend, Thomas Meagher, was transported as a convict to Van Diemen's Land in 1849 and settled in Ross in Central Tasmania, not very far from Bothwell. He and the Mitchels were able to meet clandestinely for a meal and a drink at Lake Sorell in the period before Meagher escaped to the United States in 1852.

At this point, Tom pointed out that the story of Mitchel and Meagher shows an aspect of Australian history generally overlooked. In our childhoods, we learnt that everyone was 100% loyal to the Crown and we were the recipients of its largesse. However, we actually became the recipients of Rights in advance of English Rights, including universal male suffrage and later universal female suffrage.

Reflecting this, in the case of Meagher's and Mitchel's later escapes, colonists were heavily involved in these questions at the end of transportation. When Mitchel escaped in 1853, he did so with the help of the Tasmanian establishment as well as local Irish horsemen and farmers. He was very aware of this fact, knowing that these groups – the Establishment and rural proletariat – wanted an end to transportation as well as colonial self-government and a wider franchise than anything in Ireland.

Before Meagher escaped, he had married an Irish highwayman's daughter, Catherine Bennett. Leaving her in Tasmania, he took a Yankee whaler, sailed to San Francisco, journeyed across Nicaragua, and then caught another ship to New York, the shortest route to avoid rounding Cape Horn. In New York, he was immediately greeted as a Cabinet Minister in the as-yet-unrealised Irish Republic.

Mitchel successfully escaped the following year with the help of the same agent as Meagher's – Nicaragua Smythe – who also managed to put Jenny and the children on the same ship as Mitchel. After they arrived in San Francisco, Smythe took them across Nicaragua to New York as he had with Meagher.

In New York, Mitchel was appalled at the number and severity of industrial accidents that occurred daily. From his publishing business in Pearl street, he became aware of seamstresses plunging from the windows of burning buildings and knew about workers caught in tunnel collapses and boiler explosions. At the morgue he saw attendants playing with the bodies of those who had perished in a molasses factory fire.

Mitchel decided that “this was capitalism” and became appalled at Yankee capitalism, whose promotion of doing away with slavery was, to him, hypocritical, when their paid employees were treated like slaves. This was well before Tolstoy and his social agrarian solution.

Meagher also settled in New York, where he became a well-known concert-goer beloved by New Yorkers. When the Civil War started, he had been sympathetic to the ‘Let slavery die’ view. Let the South come to its senses he thought.

In winter 1853, together with others, including Meagher, Mitchel planned ‘a sophisticated journal of opinions and reviews’ for the Irish in America. This was *The Citizen* and its first edition sold 50,000 copies. There was some debate about whose opinions should be expressed and, later, an opinion piece by Mitchel regarding his views on slavery was strongly criticised.

In spring 1854, Mitchel, wanted to explore more of the US and he and his family relocated south because of his belief that a true Jeffersonian life was possible in the south. He and Jenny settled in the Great Smokies – the Alleghany Mountains of East Tennessee (Tom made the aside that the Mitchel family was surrounded by the forbears of Dolly Parton).

The Jeffersonian ideal, which appealed to Mitchel, was one where everyone was poor, everyone had a farm, and no one owned a slave. Those who lived this life spoke, according to Tom, like Elizabethans speaking from a Shakespeare play. But Mitchel began to realise that this “Hillbilly Elizabethan” view of the world, of medicine and other aspects of life, was also Elizabethan.

Later, Mitchel moved to Knoxville where the Mayor of Knoxville invited him to start a newspaper which Mitchel named *The Southern Citizen*. In his newspaper, Mitchel compared the South to Ireland in that it had primitive industries and the North put tariffs on these and bled them dry.

On top of this there was interference by the Federal government regarding state governance. This was the old cry of the Confederacy, so this suggests that Mitchel was already a Confederate in 1856-7.

Meagher, his first wife having died, married a steel heiress, Libby Townsend. The Townsend family worked in Tuxedo Park, off the Hudson where the family had previously built the biggest steel chain of that time, which they had strung across the Hudson to stop the British Navy progressing further during the War of

Independence. Libby Townsend was ‘high Yankee’ but converted to Catholicism to marry the Jesuit-educated Meagher. With this marriage, Meagher married into the Yankee tradition.

Later, like Mitchel, he was outraged when Fort Sumpter was fired upon. Interestingly, at this event, John Mitchel’s son, John C., was at Fort Moultrie and was involved in the early bombardment that led to the first damage of the War – a boy raised in Tasmania and now son of a ‘fanatic hero of the South’.

By the outbreak of the Civil War, Mitchel’s beliefs had firmed. From his own experience he believed that the Coercion Act in Ireland imposed severe tyranny over the Irish and prevented them from being able to rise up, even though they were suffering during a famine which got steadily worse.

Earlier, during his early period in New York, Mitchell’s beliefs regarding the blacks – African slaves – also became firmer. He wrote that there was extensive evidence that whites were ‘a special race’ and that it was not possible for Africans to become free and equal because they were not ‘adequate to freedom’.

Freedom would only bring inadequately paid jobs in factories where they would be exploited by Capitalists indifferent to their survival. They were an inferior race who should not be despised, he said. Their potential exploitation by Capitalists meant they would be better treated as slaves because of their monetary value. However, he also based his views on those of German Social Theorist, Johann Blumenbach, gained through the study of skulls.

Later, in Knoxville, on the basis of these beliefs and his interpretation of biblical passages, Mitchel became editor of *The Richmond Enquirer* and later *The Richmond Examiner*.

Tom then discussed Mitchel and Meagher’s later experiences during the Civil War. At the outbreak of war, they were on opposite sides but did not want the Irish killing each other. They thought that the Irish would get military training and then invade Ireland, which never happened. Instead, they killed each other.

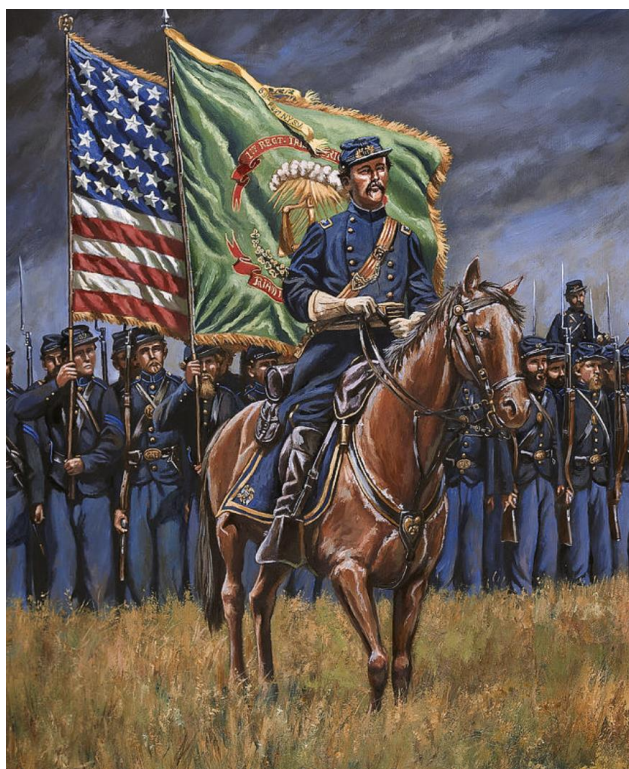
The closest that Mitchel and Meagher got to each other during the War was at the Battle of Fredericksburg in December 1862, when Union troops crossed the Rappahannock River in pontoons against stiff Confederate fire. As the North crossed, Confederates began to give up the town by stages. They also knew that the Union would attack at St Marye’s Heights. It was here that two of Mitchel’s sons were

fighting with the 1st Virginia Montgomery Guards. At a later battle, 17-year-old Willy Mitchel, a gifted botanist, was killed at Pickett's Charge.

This event – the death of Willy – finally drove Jenny and John apart. John's intractable support of slavery, which Jenny did not share, was another factor. It is interesting that, although Mitchel's sons were happy to die for state's rights, Mitchel never owned a slave.

At Fredericksburg, Meagher led the Irish Brigade as part of Hancock's division, and it has been claimed that he met Mitchel the night before the battle on St Marye's Heights in December 1862.

At this battle, soldiers in Meagher's Irish Brigade were so convinced they would not survive that they carried their names and addresses pinned to their jackets. Many, in fact, did die, and, when Meagher a year later tried to recruit more soldiers for the Irish Brigade, they were no longer so keen to fight in the war.



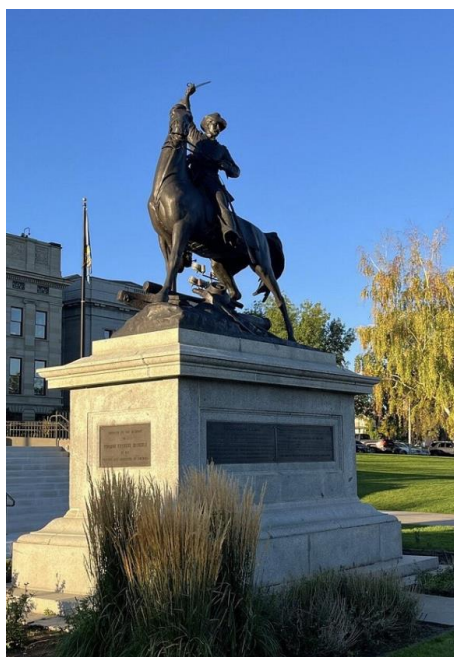
General Thomas Meagher and the Irish Brigade: "The Battle of Antietam" by Mark Maritato. Fine Art America

Meagher went on to become a Brevet Major-General in Sheridan's rearguard.



Thomas Francis Meagher circa 1865

Later, President Lincoln appointed him Governor of Montana, where he died in 1867, aged 43, either from a drunken fall from a boat in the river or by vigilantes. Tom tends to think the latter because Meagher was filling Montana not with Republicans but with Democrats, including Southern Democrats, and he needed to be stopped. His statue is outside the Legislature in Helena.



Statue of Thomas Meagher in St Helena, Montana

Mitchel continued to edit *The Examiner*, a pro-President Davis journal, until he fell out with President Davis through his belief, amongst other reasons, that the Southern Army should be tougher on the North. He also began to believe that the Presidency had too much Executive power.

At the end of the war, he was 'rescued' by federal officers and taken to New York, put in charge of the newspaper and edited it as if the war was continuing. He was then imprisoned in Fortress Munro with Jefferson Davis, was

ultimately released through Democrat political pressure and returned to Ireland. There he was elected to the House of Commons as the Member for Tipperary but died in his childhood bedroom in Newry in 1875, aged 59, before he could take up his seat.



John Mitchel's statue, installed in Newry in 1965, has led to recent controversy, including demands for it to be removed because of Mitchel's support of slavery.

This grand story connects Australia to the American Civil War. Tom concluded his talk by referring to his long-standing friendship with the late Senator Ted Kennedy. They went out together on Kennedy's yacht in Kennebunkport to engage in a seminar on Meagher because young Ted and his brothers had had to recite the speeches of Meagher in the dock that he gave before he went Van Diemen's Land. Sentenced to death, Meagher gave an 'Irish speech' at the end of the sentencing in which he said, "Your Honours, I shall not keep you long" and then talked for two hours.

The monument to the Irish Brigade at Antietam is the work of Senator Kennedy. In this battle, at the Sunken Way, Meagher's battalion lost 500 soldiers in 15 minutes. In his research, at the Huntington Library, Tom came across Meagher's pass to be a guard on Lincoln's coffin. Tom commented with some sadness that very little is known about Thomas Meagher.

At the end of this wonderful talk, Peter Zacharatos thanked Tom and referred to him as 'a walking encyclopedia' and called for rounds of applause.

Dan Howard was then asked to make a presentation. He thanked Tom for his wonderful and intriguing story and then bestowed on him Honorary Life Membership of the Association, which Tom called a grand honour.



Dan presents an Honorary Life Membership Certificate to Tom

Tom's lively and informative talk was very well received by the members.

This intriguing story of two renowned (at the time) Irish rebels in the time before the American Civil War will lead many to pursue the story further.

Tom's wonderful book on the topic really fleshes out these two individuals and the influence they had on events across continents and on those around them. His description, particularly, of Mitchel's circuitous escape from Tasmania and the events that enabled him to reach New York, is fascinating and surprising.

But so many parts of this story are memorable that it is difficult to single out only a few. A great read – you'll be surprised and informed.



Tom Keneally with Past President and Committee Member Bruce McLennan



A good crowd attended



Members enjoyed themselves



Maureen Morris with Len Traynor

An Unexpected Connection

In his talk, Tom referred to Thomas Meagher's friendship in Ireland with Jane Elgee, who gained fame as the poet Speranza. She later married Sir William Wilde and had two sons, one of whom was the 'notorious' Oscar Wilde. The other, Oscar's older brother, Willie Wilde, was a clever, hard-drinking journalist who travelled between Ireland and the US.

In our last ACWRTA newsletter, *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* was discussed. Frank and his wife, Miriam, maintained the newspaper for many years and, when Frank died in 1880, Miriam continued the newspaper, even changing her name to Frank Leslie. However, in 1891, aged 50, she still had the time to get married for the fourth time to ... Willie Wilde (then 39)! However, despite her being attracted initially to his humour and wit, the marriage was short-lived. Miriam initiated divorce proceedings within a year because of Willie's alcoholism and womanising.

The Annual Leonard Traynor Award for Contribution to the Newsletter



The 2022 Award was presented by Len Traynor to Jannette Greenwood, editor of this newsletter.

Jannette would like to acknowledge the help she receives for each newsletter from Bruce McLennan. Thank you, Bruce.

Civil War Profiles

Winslow HOMER (1836 – 1910)

Our last newsletter (number 115) looked at Civil War illustrators and their contributions to the two main newspapers that carried illustrations, *Harper's Weekly* and *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*.

An artist who contributed to *Harper's* throughout the war was Winslow Homer, considered today by many to be America's most beloved artist, whose later fame derived from his paintings of rural scenes and seascapes.

Homer had already established himself at *Harper's* as skilled illustrator with a keen eye for detail and he continued to actively pursue his craft for the length of the Civil War. By the end of the war, he had produced some of the most iconic behind-the-scene views of the Civil War.

Although he had been apprenticed to a lithographer in Boston, Homer was largely self-taught. At the outbreak of the Civil War, aged 25, he was working as a freelance artist with plans to travel to Europe for further study. However, he joined *Harper's Weekly* as a special correspondent and was sent out into the field.

His initial sketches in October 1861 were of the camp, commanders and army of Major-General

George McClellan on the banks of the Potomac River. After this, he quickly developed a reputation for his depictions of the routine of army life and the frustrations and boredom of life in the field. He also painted scenes of women during wartime and life on the home front.

Like other artists and illustrators, he made sketches in the field. These sketches were couriered or posted back to New York, etched onto woodblocks by engravers and then screen printed by the newspapers as illustrations. As well, both during and after the war, Homer created finished paintings in his studio, using his field sketches as a guide. One such is *Rainy Day in Camp*, an oil painting created in 1871 from a sketch.

In 1864, Homer was elected an associate of the Royal Academy. At the end of the war, he left the field of journalism altogether and concentrated for the rest of his career on his greatly loved depictions of country life, childhood and young women.

His most famous Civil War paintings include *Home, Sweet Home*; *Defiance: Inviting a Shot before Petersburg, Va., 1864*; *Sharpshooter on Picket Duty*; *Prisoners from the Front*; *A Rainy Day in Camp*; and *Pitching Horseshoes*.

and character. It was considered a remarkable technical achievement for a young, self-taught artist.



A Sharpshooter on Picket Duty
One of Homer's best-known Civil War sketches



Rainy Day in Camp
Homer's last painting of the Civil War (1871) alludes to Reconstruction. The image shown a scene at Yorktown, Virginia in 1862, where Homer experienced rain, insects, disease and other hardships. The forlorn mule on the right, with the name 'Jeff' on its neck, is a reference to former President Jefferson Davis.



Home Sweet Home
One of Homer's first paintings. It was enthusiastically received at its first exhibition in 1863 and marked his debut as a painter. Comments were made as to its 'real feeling' and lack of sentimentality and its sense of mind



Our Women and the War
Homer reminds readers of the diverse roles played by women in support of the war – both at home and at the front.



This Homer illustration was published by Harper's a few months after the war's end. It depicts a young woman and her beau, a Union veteran whose arm has been amputated, enjoying a carriage ride. Homer reminds Harper's readers that the war might be over but there are still after effects.



Homer's poignant oil sketch depicts a shy young man thrust into a man's world



Defiance: Inviting a Shot before Petersburg (1864)
 This provocative painting is his only one focussed on the Confederate side. It depicts trench warfare and shows the environmental devastation caused by the conflict. Also shown (but difficult to see) below him is an enslaved African-American playing a banjo.



Prisoners from the Front (1866)
 A Union Officer and two guards are depicted with three Confederate soldiers. This was in the last days of the war when losses had depleted Lee's army. Note the various ages of the soldiers. Comment has been made about the subtle signals that Homer might have been transmitting: the defiant attitude of the prisoner in the centre of the painting, the fact that all the soldiers are placed at the same level and are therefore implied to be equal, and the possibility that the soldier behind the prisoners may be black. It has been suggested Homer was making a reference to the need for reconciliation.

New members

We are delighted to welcome new members at our Roundtable.

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.

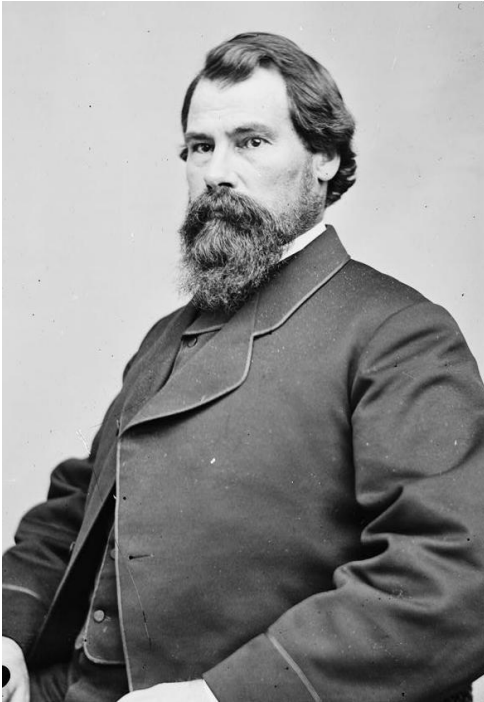
Please do not hesitate to volunteer to myself or John Morrison on a topic of your choice, be it short or long.

Ian McIntyre

This publication is the official newsletter of the American Civil War Round Table of Australia (NSW Chapter). All enquiries regarding the newsletter should be addressed to the Secretary of the Chapter by phone on 0411 745 707 or email: secretary@americancivilwar.asn.au

CIVIL WAR PROFILE - JOHN HENNINGER REAGAN (1818 – 1905)

Postmaster of the Confederacy



John Reagan was born on a small farm in Tennessee in 1818 near the Great Smokey Mountains. Growing up he worked in his father's tannery and later hired himself out as a farmworker. His early education was sporadic. At the age of 20 he left home and went to Texas where he took part in the Cherokee War and later worked as a deputy surveyor and frontier scout. He became a JP and the captain of a company of militia in Nacogdoches. In time he studied law and practiced as an attorney and later a County Judge in Henderson County.

Reagan soon became one of the leading lawyers in Texas. In 1847 he won a seat in the state legislature. In 1852 he was elected to a six-year term as district judge. In 1856 Reagan won a seat as a Congressman for Texas.

Reagan supported the concept of the union because the Constitution guaranteed the right of property in slaves and he was a supporter of slavery. Unsurprisingly, when the rift of secession came, he sided with the Confederacy.

In his memoir written long after the war, Reagan wrote:

I think the facts I have presented show that the rights and sovereignty of the States, and the social and industrial

systems of the South, and property, valued at about three thousand million dollars, were dangerously menaced by the policy and action of half the States and two-thirds of the white population. Even with all this threatened wrong, the South sought by every means in its control to avoid an unequal war. The people of the South had no organized government, they had no army, no navy, no treasury, and the most limited means for creating any of these, as the South had not been a manufacturing country. In attempting to withdraw from the Union they hoped to do so peaceably and had no purpose to interfere in any way with any of the rights of the Northern States. They simply desired to withdraw from association with a government which had already demonstrated its deadly hostility to the rights and interests of their citizens; and to establish for themselves a government friendly to their own interests. (Secession and the Civil War: Memoirs of John H. Reagan (1905, Abridged, Annotated) (p. 70 available on Amazon)

Reagan was promptly appointed the inaugural Postmaster General of the Confederacy by Jefferson Davis. He soon head-hunted many of the most senior bureaucrats in the US Postal Service, who went south to work for him, bringing vast expertise with them. It is little wonder that his department was considered the best run in the new Confederacy. Historian William C Davis stated that "Reagan in effect had stolen the US Post Office"! Reagan held this position throughout, until the Confederacy collapsed.

Despite the many challenges his department faced maintaining reliable postal services in the extreme circumstances of a difficult war, Reagan managed to maintain effective services in the circumstances and even turned a profit for the Confederacy's post office.

Although Fort Sumter was fired upon on April 12, 1861, the US Post Office operations in the south continued until 31st May, 1861. The US postage rate had been 3 cents per letter up to 3,000 miles, and stamps were readily available. When Reagan's Post office of the Confederacy commenced on 1st June, 1861, he increased postage rates to 5 cents for letters under 500 miles and 10 cents for letters over 500. This was later changed to 10 cents for all letters. However, no postage stamps were available anywhere in the south and the situation was dire for some months.

One complainant in the Richmond Examiner of 26 September 1861, lamented:

Postage Stamps – the want of this necessary accommodation in Richmond, to which our people have become used under the old Washington government, is felt to be a most serious inconvenience by all who rely on the Postal Department of the Confederate government as a means of communication...It seems to be conceded that something ought to be done to allay the growing discontent.

Given the prompt Federal blockade of southern ports and the resulting difficulty of obtaining supplies such as paper, as well as the limited choice of suitable engraving and printing businesses in the south capable of producing quality stamps in large numbers, it was not until October 16, 1861 that Confederate stamps were finally available.

Early Confederate stamps were not of the best quality, and supplies of these tended to become scarcer the further away from Richmond a post office was. Many remote postmasters, particularly west of the Mississippi – such as in Texas – were allowed, or at least tolerated by Reagan, to ‘improvise’. A number had their own stamps printed locally, or resorted to rubber stamps indicating that postage was paid, or simply signed the envelope confirming that the postage had been paid.

Here is an example of a postage stamp printed by the postmaster in New Orleans in 1862:



had no background in stamp printing. The first official issue was a 5 cent green stamp bearing the portrait of CSA President Jefferson Davis, making him the first living President to appear on a postage stamp. Because of the low quality of their stamps, Hoyer & Ludwig lost the contract. The internationally-known London, England printing firm of Thomas De La Rue & Co., prepared plates and stamps to the CSA until a southern firm was found to take over the work. That firm, Archer & Daly, began producing stamps in 1863.

Here is an image of the first Jefferson Davis stamp:



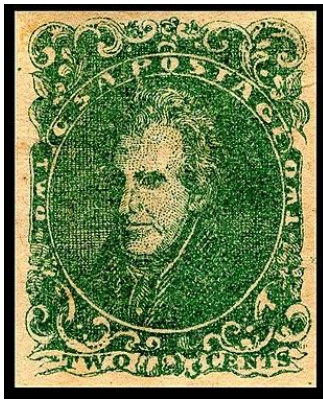
Other official stamps issued by the Confederacy included images of George Washington, Thomas Jefferson and Andrew Jackson, demonstrating the South's drawing on the inspiration of founding fathers and past presidents. Also included was John C Calhoun. Examples of these are below:



Jefferson

According to the Smithsonian website at <https://postalmuseum.si.edu/exhibition/a-nation-divided/the-confederate-postal-system> :

The first Confederate stamps were printed by the Richmond, Virginia Lithography firm, Hoyer & Ludwig, which



Jackson



Calhoun



Washington

Under conditions of war, delivery of mail was often fraught – blockade runners carrying important international mail in and out of the South were frequently captured, sunk or run aground. Systems of prisoner of war mail exchanges were established for a period, and there were also deliveries under Flag of Truce between the north and south. Nevertheless, through all the difficulties and uncertainties, Reagan managed to garner a reputation as a man who could get the job done.

Reagan became a close friend of Jefferson Davis, and was with him when they were both captured by Federals on May 9th, 1865, near Abbeville, Georgia. Like Davis, Reagan was imprisoned. According to an article on the

Texas State Historical Association website at <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/reagan-john-henninger> :

The harsh realities of losing awaited the Confederate leaders. On May 25, 1865, Reagan and Vice President Alexander H. Stephens of Georgia were sent to Fort Warren in Boston harbor, where for the next twenty-two weeks Reagan was in solitary confinement. After reading northern journals and newspapers that revealed the depth of animosity and bitterness toward the South, he wrote on August 11 an open communication to the people of Texas in which he appealed to them, as conquered people, to recognize the authority of the United States, renounce immediately both secession and slavery, and, if commanded by the federal government, extend the "elective franchise" to former slaves. Otherwise, he predicted, Texas would face the "twin disasters" of military despotism and universal Black suffrage. After his release from Fort Warren and return to Texas early in December 1865, Reagan discovered that most Texans had politically disinherited him because of the Fort Warren letter. He retired to Fort Houston, his family home at Palestine, and farmed his neglected fields.

Reagan urged that the South accept reconstruction and permit the nation to move ahead – often drawing criticism from southerners. He was a supporter of the 'Lost Cause' legacy. In time his letter from prison was seen by Southerners to have been prophetic, and his reputation was thus restored. He became a member of Congress for Texas from 1875 – 87. He was elected to the US Senate in 1887, but before his term expired, he resigned to become the Chairman of the newly formed Texas Railway Commission.

Reagan lived a long life, dying of pneumonia in 1905. He had been married three times (his first two wives predeceased him) and he fathered eleven children.

There is of course more to Reagan's life and more of interest to explore regarding mail and postage of the Confederacy during the Civil War, than we have space to discuss here.

For further reading see Reagan's memoir referred to above 'Secession and the Civil War: *Memoirs of John H. Reagan*' (1905, *Abridged, Annotated*; see also C W Deaton, 'The Great Texas Stamp Collection' (2012 University of Texas Press). There are also a number of interesting internet entries on Confederate Postage.