

Sumter to Appomattox

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

No. 57, October 2011

Please visit our website www.americancivilwar.asn.au

A Message from the Chairman –

It was most heartening to observe the continued increased interest in our activities with the numbers of members and guests attending our last meeting, although I do believe the attendance of our first Honorary Life Member, Len Traynor, and his guest, the former Premier of New South Wales, the Hon Bob Carr, must rate as one of highlights of our meetings to date. As the speaker for the evening, I was very happy that their attendance came as a surprise – early warning would have resulted in a severe attack of nerves! As it was I thought I wasn't too intimidated, that was until Mr Carr asked the question about what I regarded was the greatest intelligence coup during the War. Not only did I stumble for an answer but, I spent the rest of the night thinking of what I should have said and that would have been something like – given the nature of intelligence, we probably will never know what was the greatest intelligence "win", only what has become known publically.

Enclosed with this Newsletter is a proforma for the 'Renewal of Annual Subscription' for Chapter members. The subscription fees remain the same as previously being set at **\$40:00** for members living in the Sydney Metropolitan Area and **\$30:00** for others living elsewhere. This differential rate had been introduced to cover the increased venue hire fees we are now required to pay for our evening meetings. Members are asked to give their early attention to payment of this subscription to Brendan, thus allowing us to remain financially viable for another year.

In the last couple of Newsletters, we have presented some interesting but sad news about the Civil War author and amateur historian, Thomas P Lowry. Lowry has been given a life ban from the National Archives research facilities after being charged with forging the date on a Civil War document thereby making the document of greater historical significance. Since that time, Lowry has prepared a written appeal of which we have been able to obtain a copy. Any member who would be interested in reading this appeal document is asked to contact me at the October meeting and I will provide a copy for study.

John Cook

Our Next Meeting

The next regular meeting for 2011 will be held at our usual venue - **Roseville Memorial RSL Club, 64 Pacific Highway, Roseville** on **Monday, October 31**. As is the normal custom for our gatherings, the meeting will commence with a bistro-style meal from 6pm with the meeting proper to start at 7:30pm.

The format of this meeting will differ a little from that of previous meetings in that **Bruce McLennan** will provide a short "ideas" paper and this will be followed by a "roundtable" discussion led by our new honorary life member and distinguished historian, **Bruce Dennett**. The topic for discussion at the meeting will be:

A Social History of Antebellum North Carolina

This joint session will comprise Bruce McLennan providing some interesting family history regarding the Scots who migrated to the Carolinas in the 18th Century and first half of the 19th Century and how their culture influenced the secession movement that led to the War in 1861. In his inimitable way, the other Bruce will then get us to think about the issues raised and challenge us to glean what we might consider to be the most accurate account of this aspect of American history. The success of the meeting, however, will depend on your active participation in the discussion that will comprise the major part of the meeting. Some pre-reading, as suggested on page 3 of this Newsletter will be most useful. Please make a special effort to come to this meeting and, if possible, bring a guest.

Last Meeting's Paper

Copies of the paper on which the presentation at our last meeting was based, have been printed and will be available at the October meeting. Non-metropolitan Sydney members can obtain a copy of this paper, on request.

It Happened in October

HATCHES AND DESPATCHES

October 1, 1864 – Famed Confederate spy, Mrs Rose Greenhow drowns as she tries to avoid capture;

October 2, 1800 – Nat Furrer, slave and leader of the slave insurrection at Southampton, Virginia, in 1831, is born in Southampton County;

October 26, 1864 – Confederate guerrilla Bloody Bill Anderson is killed in an ambush near Richmond Missouri.

COMMAND AND POLITICAL APPOINTMENTS

October 8, 1864 – General William T Sherman is named to command the Union Department of the Cumberland with headquarters at Louisville;

October 11, 1861 – Brigadier General William R Rosecrans assumes command of the Federal Department of Western Virginia;

October 28, 1862 – Brigadier General John C Breckinridge assumes command of the Army of Middle Tennessee.

CRIMINAL ACTIVITY

October 16, 1859 – The abolitionist John Brown leads an unsuccessful raid on the Government arsenal at Harpers Ferry, Virginia;

October 19, 1861 – A small Confederate raiding party robs three Vermont banks of over \$200,000.

BATTLES / MILITARY ACTIONS

October 4, 1862 – The Battle of Corinth, Miss, ends with a Confederate withdrawal from this important rail and road centre;

October 5, 1863 – Confederate torpedo boat *David* with a four-man crew, attacks the Federal ironclad *New Ironsides* outside Charleston Harbour;

October 6, 1861 – Confederate blockade runner, *Alert*, is captured by the Federal Navy off Charleston S.C.;

October 7, 1864 – *USS Wachusett* captures the raider *CSS Florida* in a controversial action at Bahia, Brazil;

October 9, 1864 – Union cavalry under Custer and Merritt engage and rout Confederates at Tom's Brook (Round Top Mountain, Virginia);

October 14, 1863 – Confederates strike retreating Federals at Bristow Station, VA., in an inconclusive engagement;

BATTLES / MILITARY ACTIONS cont'd

October 18, 1862 – John Hunt Morgan and his Confederate raiders defeat Federal cavalry near Lexington, Kentucky;

October 21, 1861 – Federal forces suffer a dramatic defeat at the Battle of Ball's Bluff (Leesburg), Virginia;

October 22, 1862 – Confederate cavalry capture London, Kentucky;

October 23, 1864 – Last Confederate effort in Missouri ends in defeat at the Battle of Westport;

October 27, 1864 – In a daring raid, Union Lieutenant William B Cushing and a 15-man crew sink the Confederate ironclad *Albatross* at Plymouth, N.C.;

October 29, 1861 – Largest combined land-sea expedition ever mounted by the United States leaves Hampton Roads, Va., for the Carolina coast and Port Royal.

OTHER SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

October 3, 1863 – Federal War Department orders the enlistment of Negro troops in the slave states of Maryland, Missouri and Tennessee;

October 10, 1862 – President Davis asks Virginia for a draft of 4500 Negroes to work on the completion of the fortification of Richmond;

October 13, 1864 – Maryland voters narrowly adopt a new state constitution abolishing slavery;

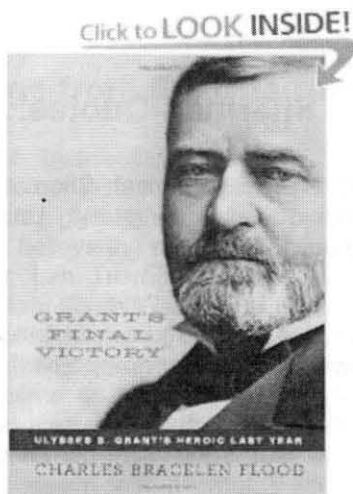
October 17, 1863 – President Lincoln issues a proclamation calling for 300,000 more volunteers for Federal armies;

October 20, 1864 – President Lincoln proclaims the last Thursday in November "...a day of Thanksgiving and Praise to Almighty God".

This publication is the official newsletter of the New South Wales Chapter of the American Civil War Round Table of Australia. All inquiries regarding the Newsletter should be addressed to the Secretary/Treasurer of the Chapter by telephone on 9449 3720 or at PO Box 200, St Ives, NSW, 2075 or by e-mail to:
secretary@americancivilwar.asn.au

Here's Something Worth a Read!

I have just come across a book that is certainly worth a read. Written by Charles Bracelen Flood, this book, is titled ***Grant's Final Victory – Ulysses S Grant's Heroic Last Battle*** and examines the last year of Grant's life. Grant had won the War but lost both his money and his reputation in the aftermath of his checkered presidency. With consummate grace, Flood traces the old general's resurrection, as he battled misfortune and disease to complete his memoirs and secure his family's financial future. It is said that heroes have no second act, but Grant did, and Flood recalls his fall and rise in a most gripping and elegant narrative.



Shortly after losing all of his wealth in a terrible 1884 swindle, Ulysses S. Grant learned he had terminal throat and mouth cancer. Destitute and dying, Grant began to write his memoirs to save his family from permanent financial ruin. As Grant continued his work, suffering increasing pain, the American public became aware of this race between Grant's writing and his fatal illness. Twenty years after his respectful and magnanimous demeanor toward Robert E. Lee at Appomattox, people in both the North and the South came to know Grant as the brave, honest man he was, now using his famous determination in this final effort, he finished memoirs just four days before he died in July 1885.

Published after his death by his friend Mark Twain, Grant's memoirs became an instant bestseller, restoring his family's financial health and, more importantly, helping to cure the nation of bitter discord. More than any other American before or since, Grant, in his last year, was able to heal this — the country's greatest wound.

The hardcover edition of the book is available from Amazon.com for \$US16.89 plus \$US9.98 postage and handling. The book is highly recommended to all who have a general interest in American history and, in particular, those with an interest in the Civil War and its aftermath.

A Photo from the August Meeting

As noted previously in this Newsletter, at our August meeting the Chapter's first Honorary Life member, Len Traynor attended the meeting with his guest, the former Premier of NSW, the Hon Bob Carr. For those "doubting Thomas's" amongst our readers, here is a photograph of our guests with the Chapter's Chairman, John Cook, taken by Bruce McLennan on his mobile phone at the conclusion of the meeting:



It is hoped that Mr Carr will be able to join us at one of our future meetings. Let's hope Len will be able to prevail on him again.

North Carolina. – Some Facts

These short notes seek to set the scene for the discussion at our next meeting on October 31, by describing the settlement of North Carolina in the 18th and early part of the 19th Century with particular reference to the town of Charlotte and how these settlers' culture influenced the secession movement that led to war in 1861.

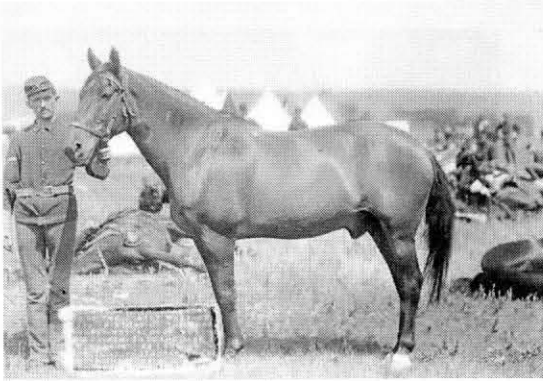
- Great Wagon Road 1755: As the northern colonies in Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia become over-crowded, settlers move south into North Carolina following Thomas Spratt's route. Many are seeking religious and economic freedom with some coming from what is now Germany, others from Scotland and Ireland – they become known as "Scots-Irish";
- Slave Trade 1764 – First slave sold – fetched £75 – slaves given new names by their masters including biblical names or names from history or literature – they weren't allowed to use their African names;
- Charlotte Town is incorporated (1768) meaning it had a courthouse and a prison;
- Gold is discovered 25 miles from Charlotte creating a gold rush to the town;
- Leading up to the Civil War in 1861, Charlotte grows as a centre for growing tobacco and cotton.

For more information about Charlotte N.C. see –

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charlotte>

We Got It Wrong!

In our last Newsletter, No.56, August 2011, we published one of a series of old photographs sent to us by one of our South Australian members, Jenny Holder. one of which will be of particular interest to Paul Kensey. This photograph, shown again below, was the sole survivor of Custer's command from the 1876 Battle of Little Big Horn – the stallion, Comanche. **That detail was correct!**



Unfortunately, however, we attributed this horse as belonging to General Custer himself. **This was incorrect!** As Paul Kensey quickly pointed out, Comanche was the horse belonging to Captain Myles Keogh who died in the Little Big Horn Battle. The Newsletter's editorial staff extends its sincere apologies for this "stuff-up".

What Happened to Comanche?

It is interesting to note what became of Comanche after the Battle of Little Big Horn. Comanche was the only living thing that the US cavalry got back from the Battle of Little Big Horn. When General Terry's reinforcements arrived, Custer and all 200+ of his soldiers were dead, and all the horses that survived had been taken by the Indians -- except Comanche, who was injured. The Indians had no use for a horse that couldn't dodge a bullet, but the White Man did!

Comanche was nursed back to health and became a living symbol and the public loved him, assuming that he had been Custer's horse (he hadn't) and that he was the Battle's only survivor (he wasn't). This was fine with the Army and the federal government, who wanted the public's support while they killed Indians. Comanche toured the country, a favorite of parades and patriotic gatherings. So why, when he died, did he end up in the University of Kansas Natural History Museum?

Comanche had been stabled at nearby Fort Riley. When he passed away around 1890, it was immediately assumed that he would be preserved and the best taxidermist in Kansas worked at the University's Natural History Museum.

The horse was shipped to the Museum and stuffed, but the officers from Fort Riley who perhaps realised that most Indians were by now either captured or dead never bothered to pick him up or to pay the taxidermy bill! So Comanche stayed and aside from being shipped to Chicago to be displayed at the 1893 Columbian Exposition, he's been here ever since.

Comanche is still on exhibit, in a glass case, wearing in his cavalry blanket and saddle. The case used to have a brass plaque: "**Sole survivor of the Battle of Little Big Horn**" but this was removed in the 1970s at the request of local tribes.

Some Sherman Quotes...

General William Tecumseh Sherman made these following quotes during the Union offensives throughout 1864:

"All that has gone before is mere skirmishing, the war now begins"

- March 1864

"They (Southerners) cannot be made to love us, but they may be made to fear us"

- November 1864

"if the North can march an army right through the South, it is positive proof that the North can prevail ... I will not attempt to send couriers back, but trust to the Richmond papers to keep you well advised. I can make this march and make Georgia howl!"

- Sherman to Grant, November 1864

"If you can whip Lee, I can march to the Atlantic, I think Uncle Abe will give us twenty days leave of absence to see the young folks"

- Sherman to Grant, November 1864

"The truth is, the whole army is burning with a desire to wreak vengeance upon South Carolina. I almost tremble at her fate, but feel that she deserves all that seems to be in store for her"

"I beg to present to you, as a Christmas gift, the city of Savannah"

- Sherman to Lincoln, December 1864