

Sumter to Appomattox

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

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Please visit our website www.americancivilwar.asn.au

A Message from the Chairman –

Welcome to our 2012 program of meetings and your Committee's aim to continue with an interesting and innovative program. As you will see from the adjacent column, our first meeting for the year is something a little different and seeks deliberately to involve a broader range of members in the conduct of our meetings. If you have view on the success or otherwise of our 2012 initiatives, please speak to your Executive and Committee members to enable us to respond positively to your views, concerns or concerns. Over the past year, our meetings have been characterised by the number of new members and guests attending. In my view, this has been a most healthy feature of our Chapter and I hope that the influx of new people to our meetings continue in the coming year.

Your Committee has met with a view to planning the program of meetings for this year. I was particularly pleased to hear the ideas of some of our new Committee members Margaret Neil-Smith, Peter Zacharatus (did I get the spelling right?) and Jennifer Kirkby - what have we done in the past without their most worthwhile input!

AS will be seen from the adjoining column the March meeting of our NSW Chapter of ACWRTA will have a different format involving a number of short presentations from key members of our new Committee. Titled "Show and Tell", we hope to provide a number of interesting perspectives of the Civil War, including a number of book reviews of newly published books that I'm sure members will want to acquire for themselves. In this regard, there will be also, a couple of surprises for members seeking some of these publications! So make sure you attend the meeting to be able to take advantage of these surprises

In the last couple of weeks a number of our long-time members "confessed" that they have yet to pay their annual subscriptions. I declined to accept the offers of payment asked that t early attention to payment of this subscription to be made to Brendan O'Connell, thus allowing all members 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 next meeting on March 19 and I will provide a copy for study.

John Cook

Our Next Meeting

The first regular meeting for 2012 will be held at our usual venue - **Roseville Memorial RSL Club, 64 Pacific Highway, Roseville on Monday, March 19**. 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 somewhat from that of previous meetings in that a number of our Committee members will provide a series of short presentations with the general theme:

"Show and Tell"

There will be a number of book reviews, together with the opportunity for members to access some new (and old) manuscripts of Civil War literature. Please make every effort to attend this meeting and show your support for our efforts to provide a worthwhile program of Civil War presentations.

2012 Schedule of Meetings ...

Our meeting schedule for this year is detailed on the last page of this Newsletter.

It Happened in March

Hatches and Dispatches

March 6, 1831 - Philip H Sheridan is born in Albany, New York;

March 22, 1817 - Braxton Bragg (CSA) is born in Warrenton, North Carolina;

March 28, 1818 - Wade Hampton (CSA) is born in Charleston South Carolina.

Command Changes

March 5, 1862 - Pierre G T Beauregard assumes command of the Confederate Army of Mississippi;

March 9, 1864 - Ulysses S Grant is named General-in-Chief of the Army of the United States;

March 11, 1862, - Lincoln removes McClellan from his command as General-in-Chief of the Union armies;

March 17, 1864 - Lieutenant General U S Grant formally assumes command of the armies of the United States.

Battles / Military Actions

March 2, 1865 - Battle of Waynesborough - the last campaign in the Shenandoah Valley;

March 7, 1862 - Battle of Pea Ridge (Elkhorn Tavern), the biggest battle west of the Mississippi;

March 9, 1862 - Ironclads *CSS Virginia* and *USS Monitor* engage at Hampton Roads, Virginia;

March 12, 1864 - Red River campaign begins under command of Nathaniel Banks (USA)

March 16, 1865 - Battle of Averasborough, N.C.

March 19, 1865 - Battle of Bentonville, North Carolina;

March 21, 1865 - Last major effort by the Confederates to Stop Sherman's march south of Bentonville, N.C.

March 23, 1862 - Jackson and Shields Clash at the Battle of Kernstown, VA;

March 25, 1865 - Grant defeats Lee at Fort Stedman, Virginia.

March 25, 1865 - Union troops begin the siege of Mobile, Alabama

March 29, 1865 - The beginning of the final Appomattox campaign;

March 30, 1864 - Confederates attack Snyder's Bluff, Mississippi.

Other Significant Events

March 4, 1861 - Lincoln is inaugurated as the 16th President of the United States;

March 4, 1861 - The "Stars and Bars" is designated as the official Confederate flag;

March 4, 1865 - Lincoln is inaugurated for a second term as President;

March 13, 1863 - Explosion at the Confederate Ordnance Laboratory in Richmond kills or injures 69 people;

March 14, 1863 - Farragut leads his Union flotilla up the Mississippi past Port Hudson, La;

March 21, 1861 - Louisiana ratifies the Confederate Constitution;

March 26, 1863 - West Virginia voters approve the gradual emancipation of slaves;

March 27, 1865 - President Lincoln meets with Grant, Sherman and Porter aboard the *River Queen* at City point, Virginia;

March 28, 1865 - Lincoln offers terms of surrender.

A Violent Abolitionist's "Midnight Rising" ...

On an October night in 1859, 21 men staged a takeover of a national armory in tiny Harpers Ferry, Virginia. Though unsuccessful, the raid drew the nation's attention to its electrifying leader, a man named John Brown — and helped set the nation on the path to war.

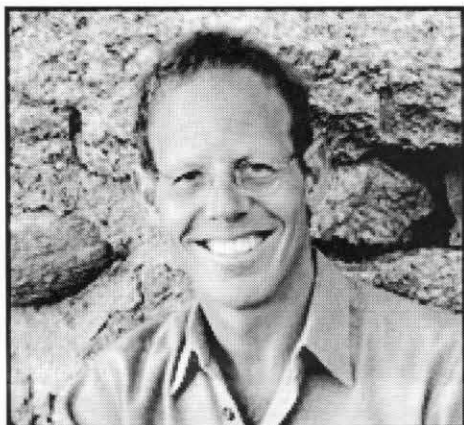
Brown, pictured below, went on to become perhaps one of the most polarizing figures in American history. The devout Calvinist and abolitionist, he is remembered as a traitor and terrorist by some, and a hero by others.



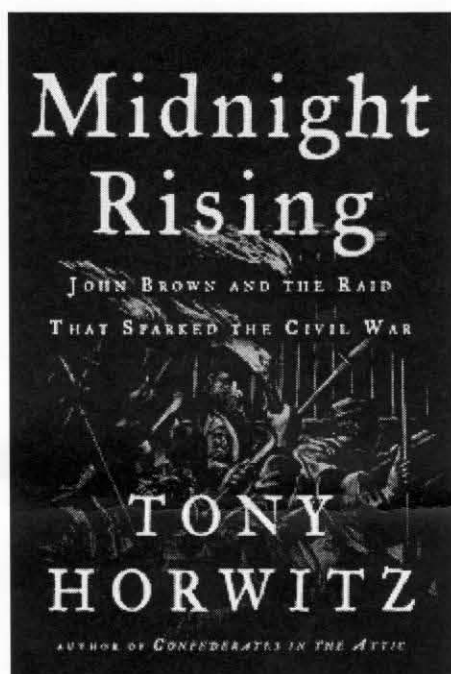
Brown's takeover and the man behind it are the subjects of historian Tony Horwitz's new book, *Midnight Rising*. Details of this book are presented on the following page of this Newsletter.

Tony Horwitz's New Book ...

Many of our members will remember Tony Horwitz's fascinating book *Confederates in the Attic* (1998) in which he took an enjoyable romp through the South with Civil War historians, re-enactors and enthusiasts.



Horwitz, pictured above, has come up with another book that focuses on John Brown's abortive raid on the arsenal at Harpers Ferry. Titled *Midnight Rising*, Horwitz presents a very interesting account of the raid that, some say, led directly to the Civil War



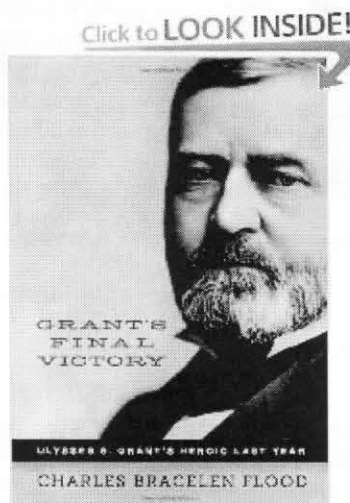
The hardcover edition of the book is currently available through Amazon.com for \$US16.79 plus \$US9.72 postage.

Members seeking a good preview of this book should access the latest edition of the Smithsonian Associates e-Newsletter, where there is a link to a 35-minute interview with Tony Horwitz, where he highlights some of the important themes of the book. It's well worth a listen!

Something Worth a Read!

In the last edition of our Newsletter a review of this book about the last year of Grant's life was presented. We are taking the unusual step of reprinting this review since it is to be part of the "Show and Tell" presentations at our forthcoming meeting on March 19.

Written by Charles Bracelen Flood, this book, titled *Grant's Final Victory – Ulysses S Grant's Heroic Last Battle*, 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 a final effort, finished his 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.

Melbourne Conference ...

Advice has been received from our Melbourne cousins that they are holding a conference at the Celtic Club in Melbourne on Saturday, March 24. The program for this conference is:

- 9.30am **Registration**
- 10am **President's welcome**
- 10.15am **Introduction** – Mr. Barry Crompton
- 10.30am Mr. Mike Hall, B.Ed - *Confederate Diplomacy*
- 11.15am **MORNING TEA**
- 11.30am Mr. Byard Sheppard - **The Reign of Iron: A revolution in the naval world**
- 12.15pm Dr. Dale Blair, BA. Hons, Ph D - ***Jackson the bold: The Battle of Kernstown.***
- 1pm **LUNCH**
- 1.30pm Mr. John 'Mike' Priest - ***South Mountain, then and now.***
- 2.30pm Mr. Warren Ellem, BA. Hons; MA; M. Phil - **Lincoln's preliminary emancipation proclamation**
- 3.15pm **AFTERNOON TEA**
- 3.30pm Mr. Chris Hookey - ***The Battle of Perryville***
- 4.15pm **Question and Answer panel – all speakers**
- 4.45pm **President's closing address**

Any of our members interested in attending this conference should contact Jeff Yuille by e-mail at:

darleith@optusnet.com.au

to indicate their interest in attending. The cost for the conference is \$45 (members) and \$55 (non-members). This conference fee includes lunch and morning and afternoon teas. Please note that the "member" rate applies to those who have paid subscriptions to the Melbourne component of the ACWRTA and not just to the NSW Chapter.

Bob Carr Re-enters Politics

Whilst it is great news to hear that the Hon Bob Carr is to re-enter politics to be a NSW Senator and Australia's Foreign Affairs Minister, I guess it lessens the chances significantly of his ever being able to come to another of our meetings. Perhaps our Honorary Life Member Len Traynor will be able to surprise us with another well-known Australian as a guest at a future meeting?

Quotable Civil War Quotes

"See what a lot of land these fellows hold, of which Vicksburg is the key... Let us get Vicksburg and all the country is ours. The War can never be brought to a close until that key is in our pocket"

- Abraham Lincoln

"Never in any battle I had witnessed was there such a discharge of musketry ... The first thing I saw was General Rosecrans crossing himself – he was a very devout Catholic. "Hello!" I said to myself, "if the general is crossing himself, we are in a desperate situation."

- Charles H Dana, U.S. Assistant Secretary of War, Chickamauga, 1862

Some More Quotable Quotes ...

Here are some interesting quotes from both sides of the conflict relating to Colonel John Mosby, CSA:

"Mosby has annoyed me considerably"

- General Philip Sheridan
Army of the Shenandoah

"Hurrah for Mosby"

- Robert E Lee

"Since the close of the war, I have come to know Colonel Mosby personally and somewhat intimately...There were but few men in the South who could have commanded a separate detachment, in the rear of an opposing army and so near the border of hostilities as long as he did without losing his whole command."

- Ulysses S Grant

2012 Schedule of Meetings ...

The proposed dates for our meetings this year are as follows:

MONDAY 19 MARCH 2012

MONDAY 21 MAY 2012

MONDAY 2 JULY 2012

MONDAY 22 OCTOBER 2012 *

FRIDAY 30 NOVEMBER 2012

**to be confirmed*

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:

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