



Sumter to Appomattox

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

No. 80, January – February 2017

Please visit our website www.americancivilwar.asn.au

A Message from Our Chairman

A good time was had by all who attended our annual **Christmas Function**. At the accompanying Annual General Meeting, John Morrison, was elected as our Program Director. Len Traynor contributed the prizes to the winning team for the trivia quiz. Thanks go to all those who contributed to making the evening such a success.

As will be seen by the notice on the second page of this Newsletter, our first Life Member Virginia (Ginny) Crocker passed away in early December and several of our members attended her funeral service.



Ginny made a big contribution to Civil War research by completing the work of her father Roy Parker on **Civil War Veterans Buried in Australia**.

The 2017 program will start with a look at the War in the West – see the separate item on the adjoining column. New members and **guests** are most welcome to this next meeting. Please feel you can “bring a friend”.

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

Our Next Meeting ...

The first regular meeting of our NSW Chapter of the ACWRTA in 2017 will be held at:

**The Roseville Memorial RSL Club
Pacific Highway, Roseville,
on Monday, February.**

As is our custom, the meeting will commence with a bistro-style meal from 6pm, with the meeting proper to start at 7:15pm. This meeting will again seek to provide “*something different*” for members, with the topic of the presentation being:

The War in the West

This presentation will involve a DVD showing of one of the lectures in the Civil War series by well-known American historian and author, **Professor Gary W Gallagher**.

Some notes and questions are provided with this Newsletter as “pre-reading” for this meeting as a means of facilitating informed discussion at the meeting. Please take the time to read these notes and consider the questions prior to our meeting.

All members are most welcome to take part in our “*Show and Tell*” part of this meeting, which involves just a few minutes telling us about something that has come your way in recent times.

Bruce McLennan

Our End-of-Year/Christmas Function

Our End-of-Year/Christmas function was held, as usual, at the Roseville Memorial RSL Club on Monday, November, 28. Although the numbers present were a little below that of previous years, the function was a great success. Thanks should go to our Committee for changing the format of the function, particularly the introduction of quality hors d'oeuvres and the alternative main courses. The Christmas cake, again provided by Mrs Cook, was its usual success. Thanks Helen!

Thanks must go, also, to Committee member, John Morrison, for his development of a most interesting and "doable" quiz and to Honorary Member, Len Traynor, for his donation of the prizes for the quiz.

Presented below is a picture of the winning team of the Civil War quiz, together with Quizmaster, John Morrison, after receiving their prizes at the conclusion of our quiz. Congratulations to the team certainly clear winners in a rather demanding test!



Vale Virginia Croker

It is with great sadness that we report the death of **Virginia Croker**, our first Honorary Member, on December 2, 2016. Virginia, whose photograph is presented below, was the daughter of Major Roy W Parker, USAF, who had extensively researched Civil War Veterans who had been buried in Australia. She edited Roy Parker's book, "*Civil War Veterans in Australia*" and spoke at our Round Table meeting on two occasions about her travels throughout Australia with her father locating graves of Civil War veterans to compile the research for his book. Longstanding members of the Chapter will remember her fascinating presentations of quite unique family "holidays", while her father's research was taking shape.

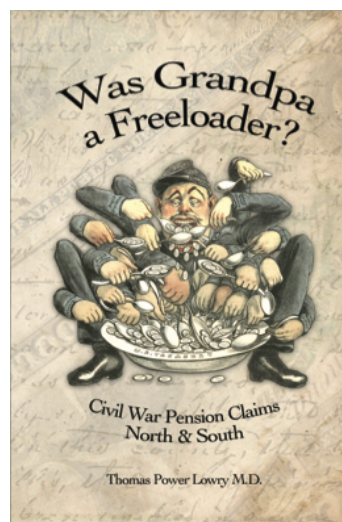


In 2003, Virginia was made an Honorary Life Member of our American Civil War Round Table of Australia (NSW Chapter), as recognition of her contribution to Civil War studies. She has continued her interest with our Chapter, even with her move from Sydney to Kangaroo Valley and, in recent times, has established personal contact with our Chairman, Bruce McLennan.

To her family, we would wish to extend our sincere condolences at this time for their loss.

This Book Looks Interesting ...

Just before Christmas, Jenny Holder, our member from South Australia, sent some information about the latest book by **Thomas P Lowry M.D.**, Civil War historian and author. This book is:



This book, which Jenny had suggested would make a nice Christmas gift for our members, contains a number of startling facts and shocking images of disabling wounds, including:

- in 1893, 37% of America's budget went to veterans.
- One Union veteran's orphan is still drawing a pension even today!
- The South paid for much of this, but got nothing!
- A one legged veteran from Virginia received \$30 in State money per year for life.

The theme of this book is that what happened could best be described as "...**the greatest transfer of wealth on American history.**"

The book is presently available from Amazon at a cost of **\$US12:99** plus postage and, if this is as good and interesting as Lowry's previous books, it will be a great read.

It Happened in February

HATCHES AND DESPATCHES

February 3, 1807 – Joseph E Johnston (CSA) is born at “Cherry Grove”, Prince Edward County, Virginia;

February 6, 1833 – JEB Stuart (CSA) is born in Patrick County, Virginia;

February 8, 1820 – William Tecumseh Sherman (USA) is born in Lancaster, Ohio;

February 11, 1812 – Alexander Hamilton Stephens, Vice President of the Confederacy is born in Wilkes (Taliaferro) County, Georgia;

February 12, 1809 – Abraham Lincoln, 16th US President is born in Hardin County, Kentucky.

COMMAND AND POLITICAL APPOINTMENTS

February 9, 1861 – the Confederate Provisional Congress elects Jefferson Davis as Provisional President of the Confederacy;

February 9, 1865 – Lee appointed General-in-Chief of Confederate Armies;

February 18, 1861 – Davis is inaugurated as President of the Confederacy;

February 22, 1862 – Davis is sworn in as President of the Confederacy in Richmond, Virginia.

BATTLES / MILITARY ACTIONS

February 5, 1864 – Sherman’s Federals march into Jackson Mississippi en route to Meridian;

February 10, 1862 – The remainder of the “Mosquito” fleet is destroyed at Elizabeth City, NC;

February 14, 1864 – Sherman’s Union troops capture Meridian, Mississippi;

February 16, 1862 – Confederates surrender Fort Donelson, Tennessee, to Ulysses S Grant

February 17, 1865 – Columbia, SC, is captured and Charleston, SC, is evacuated;

February 18, 1865 – Charleston, SC, surrenders to Union troops under Brigadier General Alexander Schimmelfennig;

February 24, 1862 – Federal troops under General Nathaniel Banks occupy Harpers Ferry, Virginia;

OTHER SIGNIFICANT EVENTS

February 1, 1865 – Illinois is the first State to ratify the 13th Amendment, abolishing slavery;

February 4, 1861 – First session of the Provisional Congress of the Confederate States of America is held in Montgomery, Alabama;

February 7, 1865 - Lincoln meets with the Confederate peace commissioners aboard the *River Queen* at Hampton Roads, Virginia;

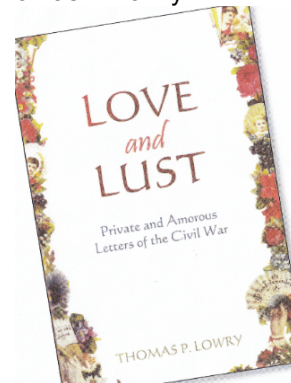
February 20, 1865 – The Confederate House of Reps authorises use of slaves as soldiers;

February 23, 1861 – Texas voters approve secession by a wide margin;

February 27, 1864 – Near Americus in Georgia, Federal Prisoners of War begin arriving at the unfinished Camp Sumter (Andersonville) prison camp.

Another Book Recommendation

Jenny Holder has recommended, also, another book by Thomas P Lowry:



Described as a trove of lost of original Civil War documents that brings us the human and private side of the War. This book focuses on:

- Soldiers pouring out their love to distant wives;
- Lonely wives writing of worry and sick children;
- A shy soldier recalling their physical embrace;
- A father’s tenderness in letters to his children;
- Single soldiers telling friends of wild women; and
- One soldier who wrote “*I won’t bring home the clap*”.

This 214-page book is one of drama, emotion, devotion, love and even rage, from both Union and Confederate soldiers. Available from Amazon at **\$US16:99 plus postage**, it is described as “... the perfect Valentine gift.”

THE ELECTION OF 1860 AND THE TRANSFER OF POWER



Has there always been a "smooth transfer of power" following presidential elections?

Americans take for granted a relatively smooth election process in which losers in elections concede to the winners. Recent statements made recently by the president elect challenges that notion, however, and begs the question: Have American presidential elections always resulted in a smooth transfer of power from one candidate or party to another? The answer is, generally **'yes'** with one very significant exception: the election of 1860.

Throughout history, there have been contentious presidential campaigns and challenges to the electoral process. The most recent of these was the election of 2000, in which Democratic candidate Al Gore and Republican candidate George W. Bush faced off for the presidency.

It was the election that went on forever—or at least that's what it seemed like. In the race between Al Gore and George W. Bush, it all came down to the outcome in Florida and with just a few hundred votes separating the candidates in Florida, the lawsuits and recounts began in full force. Five agonizing weeks after the election, the U.S. Supreme Court had the final word, ruling by a narrow majority to stop the recount ordered by the Florida Supreme Court. Bush, who had won 30 states (counting Florida) had maintained a razor-thin five-vote majority in the Electoral College. He would be the first candidate in 112 years to win the presidency without prevailing in the popular vote (It is worth noting that this was something that Donald Trump was able to "achieve" in 2016). On December 13, 2000, Gore conceded defeat and called for national unity, saying "we put country before party."

But what of the American Civil War? Many believe the election of 1860 was the most contentious in our history, and that the results led to the Civil War. "The presidential election of 1860 wasn't just contentious - it tore the nation apart," as historian, Sarah Pruitt, stated in her [History.com](https://www.history.com) analysis:

"Abraham Lincoln, the chosen nominee of the fledgling Republican Party and a steadfast opponent of slavery, wasn't even on the ballot in most Southern states. While the Democratic Party went with Lincoln's Illinois rival, Senator Stephen Douglas, as their candidate, the southern branch of the party defected, choosing sitting Vice President John Breckinridge as its candidate..."

"... Senator John Bell of Tennessee rounded out the race on the ticket of the new Constitutional Union Party. Lincoln won only 40 percent of the popular vote but took most of the electoral votes in the North, along with California and Oregon. Breckinridge won the electoral votes in most of the South, along with Maryland and Delaware; Bell won Tennessee, Kentucky and Virginia, while Douglas captured only Missouri, despite finishing second in the popular vote. Just weeks after Lincoln's victory, South Carolina voted to secede. Six more Southern states followed, forming the Confederate States of America in February 1861, with Jefferson Davis as president."

The Deep South states clearly rejected the verdict of the presidential election, and decided to leave the Union before Lincoln and his Republican Party – a party whose *raison d'être* was opposition to the spread of slavery into the Western territories – took office.

But did secession prevent a "smooth transition of power" from one U.S. president to another? The losing parties did not contest the election. Neither did the losing candidates. Southern Democrat John Breckinridge remained vice president of the United States until Abraham Lincoln took the oath of office on March 4, 1861, then resumed his seat, in the same chamber as U.S. Senator from Kentucky, where he remained until August 1861. Northern Democrat Stephen Douglas, Lincoln's political nemesis, pledged his loyalty to the Lincoln administration in the face of the growing sectional crisis.

No one tried to prevent Lincoln from assuming the presidency after the 1860 election. The Southern states, however, denied Lincoln the opportunity to exercise his presidential power over them. Their action confronted Lincoln with a challenge: would he be content to become president of part of the Union? Lincoln responded to this challenge in his March 4, 1861:

"I therefore consider that, in view of the Constitution and the laws, the Union is unbroken; and to the extent of my ability I shall take care, as the Constitution itself expressly enjoins me, that the laws of the Union be faithfully executed in all states ... In doing this, there needs to be no bloodshed or violence; and there shall be none, unless it be forced upon the national authority ... In your hands, my dissatisfied fellow-countrymen, and not mine, is the momentous issue of civil war."

The transition of power from Democrat James Buchanan to Republican Abraham Lincoln was remarkably smooth. The question fraught with potential violence concerned the shape of the Union over which Lincoln would preside. That drama played out in the six weeks after Lincoln's inauguration – and in the four years after that.

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David Cooper on 0413 010 638 or david@trendsettertravel.com.au



The above are photos taken of the 2016 tour compliments of John Morrison

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