



Battle Cry

Founded 1961,
Newsletter of the Sacramento Civil War Round Table
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Wed. of the month before
the regular meeting. Items
can be given the editor by
hand, mail or e-mail.

President's Message:

"Interwoven: Cotton and the Civil War".—Thanks to Joan Beitzel for a thorough, well-researched discussion of the plant which may have caused the Civil War. The whole story of King Cotton's influence on our history is indeed fascinating and Joan provided insights of great interest. If it hadn't been for that crop, would tobacco have a similar impact on history? I wonder.

Quite a few events are coming up soon. Paul mentioned a historically interested group of us who are getting together on the first Monday of each month to discuss a specific topic. All are invited to join us. A little homework is required for some of us but not all. The present topic is the Chickamauga-Chattanooga Campaign and we meet for breakfast at Carrow's on Sunrise and Douglas.

Next meeting is March 2nd, 10AM.

Friends of Alcatraz, Living History Tour S.F., April. 4th.
Details provided by John Nevins.

Huntington Symposium on Lincoln, Pasadena, April 3rd and 4th. Details & Registration in the February 2009 Battle Cry.

Gibson Ranch Re-enactment Weekend, May 15th to 17th. We will be recruiting volunteer guides for the school children for Friday, May 15.

Next meeting will feature a special guest speaker, Professor Gerald Henig who will discuss William Tillman, the Union's first black hero. Please note the enclosed flyer which he has kindly provided us and is printed herein on page 4. Jerry has been selected as an outstanding lecturer, has authored articles and books, and will bring and autograph copies. This promises to be a, not-to-be-missed, presentation. Come early for dinner and discussion. See you there.

Don Hayden, President.

MINUTES
SACRAMENTO CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE
Wednesday, February 11, 2009
HOF BRAU RESTAURANT, 2500 WATT AVENUE, SACRAMENTO

ATTENDANCE – 28

MEMBERS – 26

Don Hayden, President
Silver Williams, Vice-Pres.
George Foxworth, Treasurer
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Joan Beitzel
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Dennis Kohlmann
Jim Middleton, Editor
Vivian Miller

Betty Mitchell
Maurice Mitchell
John Nevins
Richard Sickert
Robert Williams
Susan Williams
Maxine Wollen
John Zasso

GUESTS – 2

Dudley Albrecht
Michael Meals

1. Meeting started at 7:03 PM. Guests and members welcomed by President Hayden. President Hayden also announced the Huntington Library Conference in Southern California on April 3 – 4, 2009. The topic will be “A Lincoln for the Twenty-First Century.”
2. At 7:07 PM, John Nevins announced that the NCWA Winter Quarters in Benicia, California on February 28 and March 1, 2009. Mr. Nevins also announced the Third Annual Event for Friends of Alcatraz on April 4, 2009.
3. At 7:12 PM, President Hayden introduced the speaker, Joan Beitzel. Mrs. Beitzel’s topic was “Interwoven: Cotton and the South.” Mrs. Beitzel spoke on many items such as indentured servants, slaves, the South, the North, malaria, Eli Whitney and the cotton gin, and good/bad years in the trade.
4. At 8:00 PM, the presentation with a question/answer period ended. A GREAT SUCCESS!!!
5. The raffle was held at 8:00 PM.
6. The next meeting on March 11, 2009, 7:00 PM, at the Hof Brau.
7. The meeting adjourned at 8:04 PM.

**George W. Foxworth,
Acting Secretary**

Treasurer’s Reports

The cash balance following the January 14, 2009 meeting was \$2,499.88. Thanks to John Zasso, other members, and guests, the raffle brought in \$84.00.

The cash balance following the February 11, 2009 meeting was \$2,508.09. Thanks to John Zasso, other members, and guests, the raffle brought in \$39.00.

**George W. Foxworth,
Treasurer**

Coming Programs 2009		
Date	Speaker	Topic
March 11 th	Gerald Henig	William Tillman: The Union's First Black Hero
Apr. 8 th	Stu Howe	California Volunteers in the West
May 13 th	Dave Davenport	2 nd Battle of Winchester
June 10 th	Larry Tagg	The Unpopular Mr. Lincoln
July 8 th	Ray Bisio	Lee, the Trader
Aug. 12 th	Jim Stanberry	The Importance of the Shenandoah Valley



The 9th University of Virginia Civil War Conference
PETERSBURG TO APPOMATTOX

MAY 27-31, 2009 • RICHMOND, VIRGINIA



With Gary Gallagher, John L. Nau III Professor of The American Civil War at U.Va.
and a host of other exceptional Civil War historians.

Past Participant registration will open at 8:30am EDT on Monday, October 20, 2008.

Registration for the general public will open on Wednesday, October 22, 2008.

To accommodate high demand, we will not accept any registration received before 8:30am EDT Monday, October 20.

REGISTRATION FORM • U.Va. Civil War Conference • May 27-31, 2009 • Richmond, VA

Date _____

Mr. ___ Ms. _____ Name for Badge _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone Day ___ Eve ___ Cell (____) _____ Social Security # (used for U.Va. record keeping) _____

Date of Birth _____ E-mail _____ May we email your confirmation materials? Yes No

PER PERSON PROGRAM FEE

- ___ \$1,095 in a single room
- ___ \$1,055 in a double room (limited availability) mutual requests only
- ___ \$1,095 in a double room w/ private bath (very limited availability)
- ___ \$995 with no lodging provided

• If you register prior to April 3, 2009: please return the registration form with a \$150 per person deposit (or the full fee if you choose). **The balance is due by April 3, 2009.**
• If you register after April 3, 2009 (space permitting): return the registration form with your full program fee.

METHOD OF PAYMENT (please check one): ___ Check (payable to *University of Virginia*) ___ Credit Card (Visa, MC, Amex, Discover)

Card Number _____ Expiration Date _____

Signature _____ **TOTAL ENCLOSED** (see above; minimum \$150 deposit) \$ _____

William Tillman: The Union's First Black Hero



- **Free African Americans in the antebellum South**
- **Free African Americans as sailors**
- **Confederate privateers**
- **New York City during the Civil War**
- **Historical figures who disappear from the public record**

William Tillman, a free African American, is virtually unknown to Civil War specialists and buffs alike, yet he was a genuine Union hero. This illiterate ship's cook and steward, acting almost alone, recaptured a Union vessel from Confederate privateers in 1861 and sailed it safely into New York City's harbor. Join Professor Henig for an account of Tillman's deed and an analysis of how Northerners, Southern rebels, and observers across the Atlantic reacted to it. Also, discover how Tillman's story managed to disappear from the historical radar screen until Professor Henig recaptured it.

Gerald S. Henig is emeritus professor of history at California State University, East Bay, where he will soon complete his thirty-ninth year of teaching. One of the most decorated professors on campus, he received the Outstanding Professor Award and was a four-time winner of the Pi Kappa Delta Best Lecturer Award. After graduating from Brooklyn College, Jerry earned his M.A. from the University of Wisconsin and his Ph.D. in American history from The Graduate Center, City University of New York. He has written numerous articles on the political and military history of the Civil War, and is the author of *Henry Winter Davis: Antebellum and Civil War Congressman from Maryland* and co-author of *Civil War Firsts: The Legacies of America's Bloodiest Conflict*, which was a selection of the nationally prestigious History Book Club and the Military Book Club. In April 2007, the book was published in a paperback edition, with a new format, a generous number of photos and illustrations, and a new title: *A Nation Transformed: How the Civil War Changed America Forever*.* In view of his outstanding record, The Graduate Center of the City University of New York honored Jerry with its Annual Alumni Achievement Award for 2008.

*** Autographed copies will be available for purchase at the conclusion of this lecture.**

A Short Summary of the Battle of Chickamauga and of the Debatable Aspects Pertaining to the Union Line Gap

Chickamauga Creek, a lesser tributary of the Tennessee River near Chattanooga, gave its name to the Battle of 19-20 September 1863, fought between the Union Army of the Cumberland and the Rebel Army of Tennessee. The word means either poison water or river of death, depending on which Indian you converse with, Cherokee or Chickasaw. The armies were commanded by William Rosecrans and Braxton Bragg, respectively; and this battle was the most severe defeat suffered by the Feds in the Civil War's Western Theater. Events leading up to the Battle are as follows:

A very successful series of maneuvers and flanking actions during the summer of '63, known as the Tullahoma Campaign, had brought the Union army from Murfreesboro to Decherd. Rosecrans was expected by the Rebels to then maneuver towards the East to gain touch with Union forces in the upper Tennessee Valley; but he formed an entirely different operational plan. One small part of the federal army would demonstrate before Chattanooga while the bulk of it secretly crossed the river (4 Sept.) near Stevenson and Bridgeport, Alabama; some 30 miles downriver from Chattanooga. Both of these river towns were on primary railroad lines, and subsequently became major supply bases for Union forces operating out of Chattanooga and points south.

The country was mountainous; roads were few and poor; and the Feds had to take full supplies of food, forage, ammunition, and other military stuff with them. It was rough country and serious risks were involved. These were intensified by the lack of accurate maps. 20th Corps under Alex McCook (There were 17 McCooks in two related families serving in the Civil War) moved across the ridges to Alpine while George Thomas' 14th Corps traversed to Trenton. (Thomas' journey across the Cumberland Mountains without adequate maps may have influenced his later decision to develop

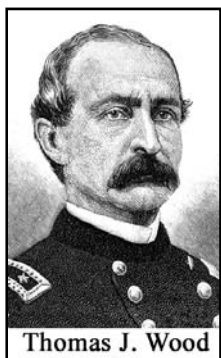
a superior mapping capability within his army under the able leadership of engineers Orlando Poe and William Merrill (See *Battle Cry* 11-08 article)) With units of T. Crittenden's 21st Corps in Lookout Valley, Bragg realized he was being flanked and he abandoned Chattanooga at once (6 Sept), relocating to the vicinity of Lafayette. The object of Rosecrans' well thought out and conducted surprise maneuvers were thus accomplished; but owing largely to the lack of good maps, plus the separation of units, the Union army was at that time still exposed to great dangers. Not being within supporting distances the three Corps were subject to defeats in detail. Thomas' column was engaged at Dug Gap (11 Sept) at the time McCook was far to the south and with Crittenden occupying Chattanooga, also at a distance. An excess of 20 miles had frequently separated the three Union Corps during these operations, and strong Rebel forces were much closer than this to each.

By 18 Sept. Rosecrans had at last collected his army along Chickamauga Creek and was well covering Chattanooga from the south. He had hoped that Bragg would have withdrawn all the way to Dalton, GA. or perhaps even Atlanta. But that definitely did not occur. Bragg had received heavy reinforcements, mostly including forces under Longstreet, and had concentrated for battle on the other side of the creek. The terrain of the forthcoming battle area, although wooded with some limited sight lines, had little influence on its course, otherwise. Both armies now lay on the plain, the two lines roughly parallel. Bragg's intention was to force his attack home on the federal left (i.e. north) wing, thus cutting the Feds off from Chattanooga and throwing them back into the mountain country from whence they had come.

Thankfully for the Union, it was George Thomas' Corps that was holding the left. On 19 Sept a series of maneuvers and skirmish actions occurred; but the real battle began the next day. The Rebels pressed hard against Thomas on the left and he applied to Rosecrans for reinforcements. In the process of so doing confusion reigned at headquarters, and Old Rosy lost track of the army's alignment in the center. He thought there was a division-wide void or gap in the line, but there really was not.

Accordingly, Rosecrans, through his at the time inexperienced staff, sent a poorly worded nondiscretionary order to the adjacent Division Commander MG Thomas J. Wood to relocate his Division. The order was marked “gallop” which in the military vernacular of the period meant “do it rapidly”. Wood followed the order, but in so doing created a real gap which was exploited almost moments later, coincidentally by the just arrived Rebel forces under Longstreet and Hood. Net result was that the federal army was cut in two. McCook’s Corps, isolated on the federal right (i. e. south), was speedily routed; and Crittenden’s Corps in the center shared its fate. Rosecrans, himself left the field in haste in the rout of half his army. Thomas was shaken, but unmoved. He reformed the left wing into a semi circle, and with a few fresh brigades from Gordon Granger’s Reserve Corps, resisted the efforts of the entire Rebel army for six hours; before orderly withdrawing to Rossville/Chattanooga that night. Hence Thomas’ sobriquet, “Rock of Chickamauga”. Union and Rebel casualties, out of 58,000 and 66,000 participants were 16,000 and 18,500, respectfully. Next Civil War event in that locale was the Battle of Chattanooga. (A *Battle Cry* article of Feb. 07 summarizes that affair.)

* * * * *



Thomas J. Wood

A large amount of criticism has been expressed by numerous historians and other writers over the years about General Wood’s obedience to the order he received that was based upon false information, and so poorly written as to be impossible to fully obey in any

event. The order to Wood read, “*The commanding general directs that you close up on Reynolds as fast as possible, and support him*”. Signed by Major F. S. Bond, Aide-de-Camp. As important as the order was thought to have been, Rosecrans had not read it. Bond was inexperienced. Rosecrans’ Chief of Staff James Garfield (later the 20th president), who usually wrote the orders was absent on other business. (The latter seems a little unusual since a major

battle was in progress. What other business was more important?) The situation at the time was that Brannan’s Division, thought to have been sent to assist Thomas was still in place between Wood’s left and Reynolds’ right flank. There was no gap. Wood could not “close up” on Reynolds, since Brannan was already there; but he could move behind him, in “support”, which he did. Thus the “line gap” was created. Wood had made arrangements with McCook to fill in the gap, but Longstreet’s breakthrough took place before that could occur. The Union line had also been broken further south, almost concurrently.

First author to initiate and fuel the controversy was Henry M. Cist, who wrote a fairly good (Other than that portion criticized, herein) short book on the Army of the Cumberland, published in 1882. Cist was a junior adjutant- type, somewhat of a glorified company clerk, on Rosecrans staff. He was not present when the above mentioned event unfolded. A summary of his writing on this subject is as follows: The points Cist made and that should be scrutinized are summarized as follows: 1) Cist contended that the wording of the order was such that Wood should have known not to obey it; 2) He argued that Wood knew that the author of the order, Bond, was inexperienced, which should have caused him to confirm the order with Rosecrans; 3) He stated that Wood’s motivation for obeying the order was vindictive due to the rebuke he allegedly received from Rosecrans earlier that morning; 4) He contended that Wood’s motivation for preserving the actual order was unique to this event, and was done with the knowledge that it would be required as evidence at a later date; 5) He wrote that Wood attempted to shift the responsibility of the movement of his division to McCook and to Thomas; 6) He said Wood’s obedience of the order caused the Union to loss the Battle.

There is no evidence that Cist offered General Wood the opportunity to review the book before it was published. Wood had a distinguished career in the War in all events of the Army of the Cumberland. He retired as a Major General, USA in 1875, but remained active in veteran’s organizations and as a member of the USMA Board of Visitors until his death in 1906 at age 83. (He had been an early roommate

of. Grant and was the last survivor of his West Point Class of 1845, in which he ranked 5/41). After Cist's book had been released General Wood rebutted Cist's contentious opinions in a Letter to the Editor of the *New York Times* on 19 Nov 1882. His comments are summarized, perhaps too briefly, as follows:

1) Concerning the order, Wood said that he had no knowledge of the writer's tactical acquirements; that orders are assumed to express the wishes of the authority issuing them, and any other interpretation would lead to a dead lock to all military operations.

2) Concerning order confirmation, He said that when I received it no firing was going on in my front. The roar of battle was borne to me from the left. The order was sent to me direct, not through the corps commander. All these circumstances emphasized immediate and literal obedience to the order. . . . In the name of common sense, and every other sort of sense, how could I support Gen. Reynolds without moving my division to the rear of the position occupied by his division, which was some distance to my left, but how far I did not then know, and, as said above, entirely disconnected from my position.

3) Concerning a vindictive attitude on his part, Wood's comments were: I state positively I was not reprimanded by Gen. Rosecrans on that morning of 20 Sept. 1863, for the tardy movement of my division nor for anything else. I saw Gen. Rosecrans but once on the 20th. The meeting was but for a moment, and occurred as I was moving my division from its position in reserve to relieve Gen. Negley's division on the line of battle. Meeting thus casually Gen. Rosecrans asked me, without heat of language or manner toward me, so far as I observed, why I had not moved earlier. I replied that I had moved promptly on the receipt of the order. He said the order had been sent some time before. I replied that I knew nothing as to when the order was dispatched from his headquarters, (be it remembered the order reached me through the corps commander,) and reiterated that I had moved promptly on the receipt of the order. Gen. Rosecrans made no further comment on the preceding movement of my division, and added: "Hurry up and relieve Gen. Negley on the line."

This was done. I certainly did not feel that I had been censured by Gen. Rosecrans, and consequently pique, as charged by Cist, could not have been the motive of my subsequent conduct on the battle-field or elsewhere. Interestingly enough, in the *Official Record*, Rosecrans does not refer to any admonishment and no primary source material has been found to support Cist's views. Notwithstanding, dozens of writers since have accepted Cist's words as gospel, and it appears only a few had ever read Wood's Letter to the *NY Times*!

4) On preserving the order, Wood noted that the preservation of orders is a custom as old as the military service; that such preservation is absolutely necessary so an officer may give a later accurate and intelligent narrative of his movements, and, further that preservation of orders is imperatively commanded by the Army regulations;

5) On shifting responsibility for the movement Wood's response was "This is a wholly gratuitous fling. . . . What are the facts of the case? Gen. McCook chanced to be with me when I received the order to support Gen. Reynolds. As was most natural, I showed him the order. Furthermore, as Gen. McCook commanded adjacent troops, (Davis' division) military usage and military propriety required that the movement of my division should be made known to him. He concurred in the interpretation of the order. He further volunteered to say that the order was so imperative and preemptory that I must obey it immediately, and added he would move Davis' division to fill the gap made by the withdrawal of my division".

Wood then sent the required orders to his brigade commanders and the movement began. He rode forward to pinpoint Reynolds' location and to coordinate for the arrival of his division. During his search for Reynolds, Wood saw Thomas. He informed Thomas of his orders and asked where he should go to support Reynolds. Thomas replied that Reynolds did not need him, but that he was needed to the far left in support of Baird. Wood showed him the written order he had and asked if he would take responsibility for changing it. Thomas assured Wood that he would. Wood then acted accordingly; and his

Division was one of the last to leave the field with Thomas' forces.

6) On Cist's alleging that Wood's obedience of the order caused the battle to be lost Wood pointed out the following: In Wood's letter to the *New York Times*, he told a different story. All of these writers have persistently and falsely represented, and attempted to make the public believe the representation true, that the disaster on the right of the national line of battle at Chickamauga 20 Sept. a.m., 1863, was wholly due to the opening of the line by the withdrawal of my division, utterly suppressing the fact that the continuity of the national line of battle had been fatally broken further to the right and rear of the position occupied by my division by the withdrawal, by order of Gen. Rosecrans, of two brigades, Lytle's and Walworth's, of General Sheridan's division. The order for that move and the movement proceeded a few minutes the order addressed to me and movement of my division. The withdrawal of these two brigades caused an opening in the line of nearly three-fourths of a mile between Gen. J. C. Davis' division (which was next, en echelon, on my right) and the remaining brigade, Laibold's, of Sheridan's division. The all-important fact to be here noted is this: That through the gap thus made in the line, to the right and rear of Gen. Davis' position, the Confederates not only could have passed, but did actually pass and gain the rear of the Union line, entirely irrespective of the opening made in the line by the withdrawal of my division.

In concluding this brief article, it is noted that author Manville of reference item six, herein listed below (and presumably his faculty advisor Robertson) believe there is strong evidence to conclude that General Wood was not influenced nor motivated by malice and revenge on his decision to obey the order. Moreover, that author concludes that Wood did the right thing. And he writes, "Blame, if blame must be issued, rest squarely with Rosecrans". The author of reference item three, Peter Cozzens, adheres to the "vindictive theory", as most of his predecessors had done. He lists Henry Cist's book, reference item one, in his material's bibliography, but not item two, Wood's Letter to the NY Times. Similarly, the author of reference item four, Steven Woodworth, perpetuates the

vindictive legend, with notes indicating that it was derived almost entirely from Cozzens narrative. And author Wiley Sword, reference item five, was also an adherent to the vindictive supposition!

So where do we go from here on this matter? To the 23-25 October 2009 West Coast Civil War Conference in Fresno/Clovis, California, of course! See the SJVCWRT web site (sjvcwrt.com) for details. Main subjects at this upcoming conference will be the Battles of Chickamauga and Chattanooga; and three of the scheduled principal speakers are none other than Glenn Robertson, Steven Woodworth and Wiley Sword. Additionally, since Peter Cozzens was scheduled as a presenter at the 2008 Clovis Conference, but could not attend that session, perhaps one of our Fresno colleagues might wish to contact him, and invite a statement as to whether his views on the current subject have changed, since publication of the above referred to 2005 Army Command and General Staff College thesis? So let's all go to Clovis in October and ask those folks some questions; and perhaps learn also what Cozzens has to say further on this long-standing, but now seemingly resolved issue, I think??

Note: Reference items 1, 2 and 6 are available on the Internet, should you wish further reading.

Bob Williams: 2-25-09

References:

1. "The Army of the Cumberland" by Henry M. Cist, Scribner's, 1882.
2. "Letter to the Editor of the New York Times" by Thomas J. Wood, 19 Nov 1882.
3. "This Terrible Sound" by Peter Cozzens, Univ. of Illinois Press, 1992.
4. "Six Armies in Tennessee" by Steven Woodworth, Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1998.
5. "Mountain Touched by Fire" by Wiley Sword, St. Martin's Press, 1995.
6. "The Limits of Obedience" A Theses by Craig Manville, under faculty adviser Prof. W. Glenn Robertson, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, Fort Leavenworth, 2005.
7. "Official Records of the War of the Rebellion", Volume 30, Series 50&51.