



The Texas Union Herald



Colonel E. E. Ellsworth Camp #18
Department of Texas
Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War

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Rattling Sabres

by
Glen E. Zook

As was indicated last month, I enrolled my younger grandson, Austin Thomas Mizerek, as a Junior Member of this camp. His membership was accepted at the April meeting. Now, I am trying to get my youngest granddaughter, Austin's sister, enrolled in the Daughters of Union Veterans of the Civil War. There is a DUV "Tent" in the city in which my youngest daughter, and her family, live, Marietta, Georgia.

A representative of the DUV National Organization has directed me to the Georgia Department Registrar. I contacted that person and she has E-Mailed me the appropriate "paper work" to be filled out and listed the required documents that need to be provided. The DUV requires more documentation than that required by the SUVCW! In fact, a LOT more!

For example, a death certificate is required for anyone, in the lineage, who died after 1900 and a birth certificate is definitely encouraged for anyone in the "line". If the death certificate has the date of birth then that will probably be accepted as being proof of birth and if the parents' names are indicated on the death certificate, then even better. An obituary may be accepted but not definitely!

I had absolutely nothing on my grandfather and only my grandmother's obituary although I did have a copy of their marriage certificate. Then, I found, on the Internet, a source of data that includes all sorts of these types of documents. From that source, I was able to locate both my grandparents' death certificates and my grandmother, at age 2, in the 1900 census. In addition, I was able to find my great grandmother's death certificate.

They also want a copy of my daughter's, Maya's mother, birth certificate, a copy of my daughter's marriage license, and a copy of Maya's father's birth certificate. My daughter's official birth certificate is on a plastic card the size of a credit card. That is what Dallas County provided when she was born. My daughter says that she has all sorts of problems when she is required to submit her birth certificate because people, in Georgia, have not ever seen such before! They have to be convinced that it is really an official, certified, birth certificate.

Here, in Texas, birth data eventually makes it way to an official state database. Whenever one needs a copy of their birth certificates, the issuing official refers to this database and then issues a piece of paper on which this data is written. For that a \$22.00 charge is made. I was

able to access this database and printed off the page that showed where my daughter was born. Then, I underlined the information and sent the DUV a copy of this with the explanation that the database is the official record, for the State of Texas, and that any other documents are just a rewritten form of this data. I hope that will suffice!

They also keep questioning why certain documents show the death of Private William James Stump as 3 July 1864 and others show 13 July 1864. Then, 2 other documents show 15 July 1864 and 31 July 1864! The DUV wanted to use the 3 July date. However, I have proof of where the "1" was dropped when the date was copied along the line. The correct date is on a pay stub. Then, the next month the "1" was written, in pencil, much lighter than the "3" and then, the next person copying the date omitted the "1" and put just 3 July. That is the date that was put on the "mustered out" sheet. But, another person, after the war, transposed the numbers and got 31 July! To add to the situation, still another person misread the "3" as a "5" and got 15 July!

I have a copy of the Indiana soldiers at General Hospital Chattanooga for the first part of July 1864. William is shown as a patient on 8 July. As such, he was still alive on 3 July! The records, at the Chattanooga National Cemetery, where he is buried, show the 13 July 1864 date and that is considered his actual date of death.

I have been informed that a number of the Women's historical organizations have a very rigid proof of the ancestry of new members whereas most men's organizations are, generally, more lenient of the absolute proof of the right to belong. I have to guess that is the result of the psyche of the female mind! The impression is that they just seem not able to trust the people wanting to join the organization!

Maya will be 13 in early August and she is interested in history and I am hoping that she will enjoy DUV membership. I am also hoping that Maya will get my youngest daughter interested in the organization! It is unfortunate, but my son-in-law is only eligible for Associate Membership in the SUVCW because his ancestors did not come to this country until the World War II period.

I am writing this in the 4th week of April and I hope that Maya's DUV membership will be approved before the newsletter goes to bed! Update: They are waiting on my daughter's marriage certificate and Maya's father's birth certificate. My daughter just moved and the safe, in which those documents are stored, is behind a number of boxes that still have not been unpacked. Hopefully, all the needed documents will be available shortly!

The Texas Union Herald

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Articles, news items, features, and the like are welcomed for publication in **The Texas Union Herald**. Deadline is normally the 1st of the month of the cover date of publication. Submissions may be handwritten, typewritten, or submitted in any of the popular computer formats (Microsoft Word, Open Office, Word Perfect, and ASCII). Please contact the editor for details.

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Articles Needed!

If the members of the **Colonel E.E. Ellsworth Camp #18** do not want to be inundated with articles that were chosen by the editor (what he wants to see in the newsletter) then they need to start inputting items for inclusion in **The Texas Union Herald**. Tidbits about the Civil War, stories, articles, current news items, photographs, even commentaries are most welcome.

Don't worry if you are not an accomplished author. Get the idea onto paper (computer, etc.) and get it to the editor. He really can edit (rewrite, etc.) and you'll be surprised at just how well you can write!

If you have E-Mail capabilities, you can either include the information in the body of the message or put it in either Word format or ACSII ("txt") format. If, for some reason, you cannot do either, contact the editor to see if your particular word processor format can be handled.

If "hard" copy, make sure the copy is legible (can be read by someone else!). Typewritten, computer printed, even in Crayon on "Big Chief" tablet is acceptable. Just get the information in!

Even small (1 or 2 paragraphs) material, or photographs, can be used. That makes editing and publishing the newsletter easier since "fill" material is available for those little areas that seem to happen whenever an article is included in the publication.

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Ancient Swords

by
Harry Dolbier

When President Abraham Lincoln called out the militia to suppress the insurrection on April 15, 1861, the United States Army boasted a strength of some 16,000 officers and enlisted men. Only four men wore the stars of general officers of the line. What role did each of these officers play in the ensuing conflict?

WINFIELD SCOTT

At the head of the army in April 1861 was Brevet Lieutenant General Winfield Scott, 75, a Virginian commissioned by President Thomas Jefferson in 1808. Young Scott, a former law student, distinguished himself during the War of 1812 and was severely wounded. He undertook a number of military and diplomatic assignments in the years following, and in 1841 President William Henry Harrison appointed him commanding general of the army. In the Mexican War (1846-48), no less an authority than the Duke of Wellington hailed Scott's campaign from Veracruz to Mexico City as "the most brilliant in modern warfare." Nominated for the presidency by the Whig party in 1852, Scott retained his commission and his command while running for office, but lost the election to Franklin Pierce.

Secession and the abandonment of the flag by many officers of Southern origin naturally raised a question as to Scott's intentions. The commanding general put an end to speculation when he announced in his usual bluff and unequivocal manner, "I have served my country, under the flag of the Union, for more than fifty years, and so long as God permits me to live, I will defend that flag with my sword, even if my native State assails it."

As war approached, Scott formulated a strategy that combined a blockade of Southern ports with a military thrust down the Mississippi Valley. This wasn't what the public and the press wanted in the Spring of 1861 -- "On to Richmond!" was the cry. The press named Scott's strategy "The Anaconda Plan" in derision of its slow and deliberate nature. Eventually the war was fought very much along the lines Scott proposed, and, as he predicted, it lasted four years.

As his country went to war, Scott, at six feet, five inches and over 300 pounds, lacked the physical ability to assume a command role in the field. He could not mount a horse unassisted. But he functioned well as general-in-chief during the hectic first months, facing and solving unprecedented problems as well as familiar problems on an unprecedented scale.

When the president appointed Major General George B. McClellan to command the principal Union forces in the East on July 26, 1861, however, Scott at last came up against a problem he could not solve. Believing McClellan at 34 was too young for so large a command, Scott nevertheless cooperated wholeheartedly. But McClellan had not yet met and never would meet a superior whom he did not believe was denying him needed support -- if not treasonously thwarting his efforts. After a few weeks of sincere efforts to work productively with his young subordinate, General Scott requested retirement on October

31. The old warrior spent some time in Europe but returned to the United States in time to see his ridiculed "Anaconda Plan" crush the rebellion. Winfield Scott died at West Point in 1866 and lies in the post cemetery.

WILLIAM SELBY HARNEY

In 1861 the commander of the Department of the West, headquartered in St. Louis, was Brigadier General William S. Harney, a 61-year-old native of Tennessee who had joined the army as a second lieutenant of infantry in 1818. Harney fought against the Creek and Seminole Indians and by the time the Mexican War broke out had risen to the position of colonel of the 2nd Dragoons. Despite his previous record, Harney failed to please Winfield Scott during the advance on Mexico City, and Scott relieved him as senior cavalry commander. Fellow-Tennessean President James K. Polk interested himself in Harney's case, Harney regained his command, and went on to perform so well at the battle of Cerro Gordo that he earned the brevet of brigadier general.

After the Mexican War, Harney returned to service against the Indians, and was promoted to the permanent rank of brigadier general on June 14, 1858.

Assigned to command the Department of Oregon in 1859, Harney precipitated an international incident when he fortified San Juan Island, the subject of a boundary dispute between Washington Territory and British Columbia. General-in-Chief Scott had to go in person to resolve the situation. After Scott pacified the British, he asked Harney if he wouldn't like to command the Department of the West in St. Louis. Harney declined the offer.

No sooner had Scott returned to Washington, than Harney once again offended the British. Reprimanded by Secretary of War John B. Floyd, he was assigned to the St. Louis post.

As commander of the Department of the West early in 1861, Harney faced the problem of keeping Missouri, a slave state, in the Union. He reinforced the St. Louis Arsenal and broke up an encampment of pro-secession troops at nearby Camp Jackson, arresting the leaders, an act which caused a riot in the streets of St. Louis. General Harney then entered into a formal agreement with Sterling Price, head of Missouri state troops, aimed at keeping the peace. Harney's actions in April and May of 1861 failed to win the whole-hearted approval of General Scott and the War Department, and he was relieved of his command. He reported to Washington for further orders, but none were forthcoming. In 1863 he was placed on the retired list and after the war brevetted major general.

In 1867-68, General Harney served on the Indian peace commission, which negotiated treaties with several western tribes.

William S. Harney died in Orlando, Florida, on May 9, 1889, and was buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

DAVID EMANUEL TWIGGS

At the outbreak of hostilities, Brigadier General Twiggs commanded the Department of Texas, guarding a 1200-mile frontier. In the army since 1812, Twiggs could look back on a distinguished career, including, like General Harney, service as colonel of the 2nd Dragoons. For

bravery at Monterey in the Mexican War he was brevetted major general.

It was not long after Twiggs, 71, arrived in San Antonio to assume command of the Department of Texas that secession fever swept the state. Twiggs made no secret of his sympathy for the Southern cause. Reporting to General Scott, he freely asserted, "I am a Southern man. As soon as I know Georgia has separated from the Union I must, of course, follow her. I most respectfully ask to be relieved in the command of this department on or before the 4th of March next."

When Texas seceded from the Union, Twiggs, still in command, was faced with the problem of what to do with his 2,328 troops, scattered in small commands along the frontier. He entered into negotiations with Texas authorities, but the talks broke off on the morning of February 16, when the general awoke to the news that a thousand or more armed Texans commanded by Colonel Ben McCulloch were gathered in the plaza of San Antonio apparently intent upon seizing the arsenal. Twiggs hastened to confront the Texans.

After token protestations, General Twiggs surrendered. He turned over nineteen army posts to the Texans and agreed to remove the U.S. troops from the state.

On March 1, 1861, "by direction of the President of the United States," General Twiggs was dismissed from the army "for his treachery to the flag of his country."

Twiggs accepted a commission as major general in the Confederate Provisional Army and was named to command the District of Louisiana. Age and infirmity prevented him from effectively carrying out his duties and the Confederate government soon removed him from active service. David Twiggs died at his home in Georgia on July 15, 1862.

JOHN ELIAS WOOL

Of 1861's regular generals, the one who saw the most Civil War service was John E. Wool. At age 77, a brigadier general for 20 years, Wool commanded the Department of the East. A native of Newburgh, New York, Wool entered the army at the outbreak of the War of 1812, and fought with credit at the battles of Queenstown and Plattsburg. He emerged from the war with the rank of colonel and the office of inspector-general. An orphan with little formal education, Wool remained in the service, where he had the opportunity to visit Europe to observe foreign military organizations and operations. He participated in the deportation of the Cherokees from Georgia and Tennessee, and in 1826 received the brevet of brigadier general.

The war with Mexico gave General Wool another opportunity to distinguish himself. After leading his troops 900 miles from San Antonio, he joined General Zachary Taylor at the battle of Buena Vista, where his gallant leadership earned him a Congressional sword, a vote of thanks and the brevet of major general.

In the early days of the Civil War, Wool's quick and decisive moves secured Fort Monroe, Virginia, for the Union. The fort guarded the entrance to Chesapeake Bay and the James River, overlooking Hampton Roads and the Gosport Navy Yard, which the rebels had seized. It was to serve as the principal supply depot of McClellan's Peninsular campaign. In May, 1862, Wool's troops occupied the navy yard, Norfolk, and the surrounding towns

after the Confederates abandoned them; he was then promoted to the full rank of major general. General Wool was reassigned to command the Middle Department, then the VIII Corps. In January, 1863, he again assumed command of the Department of the East, and led military operations in New York City during and after the draft riots the next July. Shortly thereafter, General Wool retired from the army following more than fifty years of service. He lived in Troy, New York, for the remaining five years of his life.

Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain And the 20th Maine

by
Dr. Ralph Widener

Summer passed into fall, and in October the work of exhuming the bodies and taking them to the newly established Soldiers National Cemetery on the slopes of Cemetery Hill.

In November, the President came to the battlefield to participate in the dedication of the cemetery. At the review on the field at Antietam, the Maine soldiers had looked into his eyes and seen "the sufferings and the thousand deaths" that the mere sight of the soldiers in mass had called into his mind. Again in the camp near Falmouth they had seen him, sad and abstracted. On this third visit, those of the 20th Maine who had remained here would not see him, but he had something to say about and for them.

About a fifth of his short speech was framed to state the basic issue of the war. Only the part embodied in the next two-fifths was in any way dedicatory, and this pointed out the futility of trying to dedicate a field already hallowed by the brave. The remaining two-fifths contained an exhortation to prosecute the war and was, in its intent and effect, perhaps as powerful and important as any charge, intent, and effect, perhaps as powerful and important as any charge made by Union infantry at Gettysburg. This was a fighting speech, in a sense a continuation of the Gettysburg battle effort, using as its motivating emotional force the inspiration of the deeds and sacrifices of Union soldiers on a field where their presence could still be felt. "It is for us, the living, rather to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they have, thus far, so nobly carried on."

The issue was still to be decided. The war was far from won. Let's push on with it, said Abraham Lincoln. It was just about what the 20th Maine would have wanted him to say.

Late in the afternoon of July 5th, Chamberlain led his men onto the Emmitsburg Road in a downpour of rain as the ever-cautious Meade started his infantry in a leisurely pursuit of the fast-retreating Confederate forces of General Robert E. Lee.

At Williamsport on the Potomac River, the Army of the Potomac caught up with the entire Army of Northern Virginia. With the swollen river at their back, and the Army of the Potomac on three sides of them, it appeared that the last days of the Confederacy had come. But Meade was a prudent general, and the sight of Lee's earthworks worried him. The Union advance was halted. Consultations were held. Meade worried about attacking Lee that night of July 13th in a blinding rainstorm. He would wait until morning. Under the cover of darkness, and despite a

swollen river, the Army of Northern Virginia successfully crossed the river, not losing a single man or animal doing so. A possible final Union victory was lost by an over-cautious Union General.

The rest of July, and the early part of August, was equally disappointing, the Army of Northern Virginia moving leisurely southward west of the Blue Ridge Mountains, the Army of the Potomac east of them.

On August 24th, Chamberlain was promoted to command of the 3rd Brigade, Private Gerrish of the 20th Maine saying of him, "Colonel Chamberlain had, by his uniform kindness and courtesy, his skill and brilliant courage, endeared himself to all of his men in the 20th Maine." But while Chamberlain no longer directly commanded them, he would be their brigade commander.

When Meade learned the first week of November, 1863, that Lee was near Rappahannock Station, he decided to attack him, sending General John Sedgwick in command of the 5th and 6th Corps to clear the north bank of the river where the Confederates were strongly entrenched. Coming in sight of the forbidding-looking Confederate position, the two corps got control of a couple of commanding ridges, brought up artillery and started hammering at the Confederate works with the fieldpieces. An hour, or so, of no discernible results, Sedgwick decided that the only way to get enemy infantry out of their field works were for his infantry to go in and do it.

The one who offered to go was an enterprising Brigadier-General named David A. Russell who had an idea for carrying the enemy earthworks. While at the Battle of Chancellorsville back in May of 1862, a couple of regiments, the 6th Maine and the 5th Wisconsin, had spearheaded the attack under his direction. Not stopping to fire a shot, he had charged the enemy position with fixed bayonets. And, though they lost the battle, these two units had carried a particular confederate position successfully.

Russell now wondered if he could not stage a repeat show for the benefit of those Union forces who had not been present at the original performance. He had the same two regiments - the 6th Maine and the 5th Wisconsin - here at Rappahannock Station. Half of the 6th Maine was out on the skirmish line, within a few hundred yards of the enemy redoubts. The other half could be sent out to double the weight of the skirmish line. Then, if the 6th Maine could make a sudden dash into the Confederate earthworks, followed quickly by the 5th Wisconsin, a foothold might be gained, and supporting troops could come on to widen the breach and carry the whole position by storm. The whole trick, of course, would be to keep the initial charge moving fast; if the men halted to return enemy fire, they could be destroyed. The attack would have to depend on the bayonet, but the 6th Maine - composed largely of muscular lumbermen from the Penobscot Valley and eastern Maine - had already proved that it had the resolution necessary for the use of their fearsome and unpopular tool of war.

Russell's arrangements having been completed, the 6th Maine found itself receiving the order to uncap rifles and prepare to charge the enemy works in its front, all by its lonesome.

However, the 6th Maine was about to receive some unauthorized and unexpected help. Over on the extreme right of the Fifth Corps skirmish line, the 20th Maine had worked up into a position abreast of the 6th Maine. At this point the railroad took a bend to the left, so that part of the 20th had been crowded over the tracks and was in direct

contact with the 6th Maine. Soldiers on adjacent flanks of the two Maine regiments were neighboring back and forth, and the officer in charge of the 20th Maine skirmishers, Captain Walter G. Morrill, went over to see some friends in the 6th Maine. Here Morrill got word of the proposed assault, and presently he came running back along the skirmish line shouting, "Men, the 6th Maine is on our right; let's go in with them!"

Considering that the attack was a Sixth Corps affair, in which no troops of the Fifth Corps were called upon to participate, the response to Morrill's suggestion was surprisingly favorable. Perhaps it was because there was a bright challenge and promise of glory in the Confederate earthworks, or perhaps it was because the 6th Maine were about to tackle a brutally hard job, and it didn't seem right for other Maine men to "lay back." But beyond a doubt, their chief encouragement was that they were going to be led by Captain Walter G. Morrill in person, and because another Maine man, Colonel Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain, would have a part.

About Morrill, although he was only twenty-two, he had seen more than his share of fighting. He had carried a rifle as an enlisted man in the battles of 1861 and 1862 before joining the 20th Maine as a second lieutenant. When the trials and tribulations of warfare had weeded out less durable officers, Morrill had quickly risen to the command of Company B. At Gettysburg, if you remember, he had saved his company from capture in an isolated position, and had struck the enemy from the rear in a surprise attack that had done much to turn the tide of battle on Little Round Top. So, if Captain Morrill was willing to attack the Confederate fortifications, and if Colonel Chamberlain was willing to be a part of the attack, they were willing to go with them. Around eighty of the soldiers of this portion of the 20th Maine's line prepared to move out with the 6th Maine.

It was almost sundown when the attack started. Ahead, the Confederate earthworks loomed up grimly, the black muzzles of cannons showing in the embrasures. The fight was brief. Before the Confederate defenders could bring sufficient fire to bear, the Maine men - followed soon afterward by the 5th Wisconsin - were in among them using their bayonets to full effect. There was a confused uproar of screaming and smashing. Confederate infantrymen trying desperately to shoot foe instead of friend in the tangled brawl, cannoneers battling hand-to-hand around their guns. Then the Confederates departed, trapped between their entrenchments and the river. The total bag was four pieces of artillery, 1,700 prisoners, eight battle flags, and a bridge train.

The 6th Maine had suffered 139 casualties, but added immeasurably to its fame. The 20th Maine had lost only one man killed, and seven wounded, but had reaped a lion's share of the honors. The spectacular and uncalled-for dash of the skirmishers had taken place within the sight of thousands of Union officers and men, and to them it seemed that there could be only one word to describe it - VALOR. Formal recognition would be slow in coming, but in 1898 Walter G. Morrill would be awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for his actions at Rappahannock Station. This would be the second Medal of Honor for the 20th Maine, the other being awarded to Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain for his valor at Little Round Top.

To Be Continued

The Battle of Glorieta Pass

From the pamphlet *Fort Union*
published by the National Park Service

On March 25 Colonel Slough ordered Maj. John M. Chivington and 400 men, part infantry and part cavalry, to conduct a reconnaissance in force toward Santa Fe. Next morning, as Chivington descended the western slope of Glorieta Pass into Apache Canyon, he ran into Major Pyron's Confederates, four dismounted companies of the 5th Texas, entering the western end of the canyon. Pyron planted his two mountain howitzers on the Santa Fe Trail and opened fire. By sending flanking detachments to the slopes on either side of the canyon, Chivington twice forced the enemy artillery to pull back. As the guns were unlimbering the second time, he sent his cavalry charging down the road. The bridge across Apache Creek had been destroyed, but the horsemen jumped the ditch and piled into the disorganized Texans. The charge broke Confederate resistance and scattered the Texans to the rear. As night was approaching, Chivington assembled his command and returned to Pigeon's Ranch, just east of the summit of Glorieta Pass.

Major Pyron set up camp at Johnson's ranch, outside the canyon, and sent a messenger to Colonel Scurry at Galisteo asking for help. Scurry's men made a forced march and reached Johnson's Ranch at about 3 a.m. on March 27. They parked the 80 supply wagons and, expecting a Federal attack, organized a defense perimeter. Scurry waited all day, then on the morning of the 28th, decided to take the offensive. Leaving a guard with his supply wagons at the ranch, he entered Apache Canyon with about 700 men.

Slough had also decided to take the offensive, and with 900 men and the artillery he advanced toward the summit of the pass. The other 400 he had sent with Major Chivington to slip around the Confederates and strike them in the rear. Slough and Scurry collided at Pigeon's Ranch at 10:30 a.m. The Federals set up a defensive line. Scurry mounted repeated assaults, first on one flank, then on the other, next on the center, and finally on all fronts at once. Twice the Federal line fell back to new positions. By late afternoon both sides were exhausted.

Meanwhile, Major Chivington had left the road and led his men into the timbered mountains south of the pass. At 1:30 p.m. he emerged on the brow of a steep bluff. Below was Johnson's Ranch and the Confederate wagon park. His troops poured down the bluffs and quickly took possession of the supply depot. A cannon opened fire, but sharpshooters silenced it by picking off the gunners. The Federals burned the 80 wagons, containing ammunition, food, clothing, and forage; slaughtered 30 horses and mules found in a corral; spiked the field piece; and withdrew with 17 prisoners.

Scurry had all but won the battle at Pigeon's Ranch when a courier galloped up with word of the disaster that had befallen his supply base. He sent a flag of truce to Slough asking for a cease-fire, which was gladly granted. The Union troops retired to Kozlowski's Ranch, while the Confederates remained on the field through the following day.

Confederate casualties were 36 killed, about 60 wounded, and 25 taken prisoners. Colonel Slough reported

losses of 29 killed, 64 wounded, and 13 prisoners, although other Union participants gave higher figures. Considering the total number involved in the battle, it had been a bloody affair.

Loss of the supply train dashed Sibley's hopes and in the end destroyed his grand design for the Confederacy in the West. Sibley withdrew to Albuquerque and, harassed by Canby, began a desperate retreat through rugged, waterless mountains to his base at Fort Bliss. Baylor's Territory of Arizona also collapsed. Ultimately even Fort Bliss was abandoned. As one of the Texans wrote to his wife, "If it had not been for those devils from Pike's Peak, this country would have been ours."

Death In Disguise

by
Harry Dolbier

The blue-clad cavalymen plodded warily through the thick Virginia mud towards the fortifications of Yorktown, freshly abandoned by the Confederate army. It looked safe -- no signs of life, no rebels in sight. Suddenly the ground erupted under the horses' hooves, hurling wounded men and screaming animals in all directions. The Confederates were gone all right, but they had left behind the first primitive ancestors of a fearsome twentieth-century weapon, the land-mine.

On May 4, 1862, General Joseph E. Johnston pulled his rebel troops out of Yorktown, just as Major-General George B. McClellan prepared to bombard the fortifications. McClellan had spent a month getting his Army of the Potomac ready to besiege Yorktown, the first obstacle in his Peninsular campaign against Richmond. Now, as the Yankees approached the town in the wake of Johnston's withdrawal, they encountered the deadly surprise.

Brigadier-General William P. Barry, the Army of the Potomac's chief of artillery, investigated the explosions at Yorktown. "Before reaching the glacis of the main work, and at the distance of more than 100 yards from it," he reported, "several of our men were injured by the explosion of what was ascertained to be loaded shells buried in the ground. These shells were the ordinary 8 or 10 inch mortar or columbiad shells, filled with powder, buried a few inches below the surface of the ground, and so arranged with some fulminate, or with the ordinary artillery friction primer, that they exploded by being trod upon or otherwise disturbed."

As they cautiously entered Yorktown, Northern soldiers found more lethal souvenirs left behind by the rebels. "Many of these shells," declared Major-General Fitz John Porter, who commanded the occupation force, "were concealed in the streets and houses of the town, and arranged to explode by treading on the caps or pulling a wire attached to the doors." Also, reported General Barry, "Articles of common use, and which would be most likely to be picked up, such as engineers' wheelbarrows, or pickaxes, or shovels, were laid upon the spot with apparent carelessness. Concealed strings or wires leading from the friction primer of the shell to the superincumbent articles

were so arranged that the slightest disturbance would occasion the explosion. These shells were not thus placed on the glacis at the bottom of the ditch, &c., which, in view of an anticipated assault, might possibly be considered a legitimate use of them, but they were basely planted by an enemy who was secretly abandoning his post on common roads, at springs of water, in the shade of trees, at the foot of telegraph poles, and, lastly, quite within the defenses of the place--in the very streets of the town."

Fred T. Locke, Porter's assistant adjutant-general, recalled after the war the horrible fate of a telegraph operator who stepped on a buried shell in Yorktown and had his legs "terribly mangled." The young man "died soon after in great agony."

Yorktown was soon cleared of "infernal machines" by captured rebels, who were ordered by General McClellan to search for and destroy the buried shells.

General Barry placed the blame for the outrage on Confederate Brigadier-General Gabriel Rains, who commanded the post at Yorktown. "The belief of the complicity of General Gabriel Rains in this dastardly business is confirmed by the knowledge possessed by many officers of our Army of a similar mode of warfare inaugurated by him while disgracing the uniform of the American Army during the Seminole war in Florida."

Gabriel Rains of North Carolina graduated from the United States Military Academy in 1827 and served with distinction, reaching the rank of lieutenant-colonel in 1860. Always interested in mechanics and chemistry, perhaps more of a scientist than a soldier, Rains did a great deal of experimenting with explosives. He applied his knowledge at Yorktown. "At a salient angle," Rains explained, "an accessible point of our works, as part of the defenses thereof, I had the land mined with the weapons alluded to, to destroy assailants and prevent escalade. Subsequently, with a similar view, they were placed at spots I never saw...some 6 or 7 miles this side of Williamsburg." Reporting to Major-General D. H. Hill, his division commander, Rains wrote, "some 4 small shells, found abandoned by our artillery, were hastily prepared by my efforts, and put in the road near a tree felled across, mainly to have a moral effect in checking the advance of the enemy (for they were too small to do more)."

When Jefferson Davis quoted Rains on this same incident in **The Rise And Fall Of The Confederate Government**, the story ended differently: "A body of the enemy's cavalry came upon these sub-terra shells, and they exploded with terrific effect."

Confederate Major-General James Longstreet, commanding the right wing of Johnston's retreating army, disapproved of Rains' tactics. "It is the desire of the major-general commanding," he wrote to Rains in the third person, "that you put no shells or torpedoes behind you, as he does not recognize it as a proper or effective method of war."

Rains, however, remained enthusiastic about the devices: "No soldier will march over mined land," he proclaimed, "and a corps of sappers, each having two ten-inch shells, two primers, and a mule to carry them, could stop an army." Rains had the matter forwarded up the chain of command until it came to the desk of Confederate Secretary of War George W. Randolph.

After considering the ethical and practical aspects of the question, Secretary Randolph issued the rebel government's official policy: "It is not admissible in civilized warfare to take life with no other object than the destruction

of life....It is admissible to plant shells in a parapet to repel an assault, or in a wood to check pursuit, because the object is to save the work in one case and the army in the other. Civilized warfare does not allow one", Randolph added, "to plant shells merely to destroy life and without other design than that of depriving the enemy of a few men."

During the rest of the war the Confederates made considerable use of "subterranean shells" and "infernal devices," as land-mines were then called. Presumably employed in accordance with Randolph's policy, most of the weapons came from the workshops of the Confederate Torpedo Bureau, headed by Gabriel Rains.

Rains estimated that by 1864 there were 1,300 shells planted in the defenses of Richmond, most of them rigged to explode by pulling a string. The rebels also planted extensive mine fields to protect their works at Fort Fisher, Fort McAllister, and Battery Wagner, all of which fell to Union forces despite their defenses.

Unlike its modern counterpart, the Civil War land-mine presented no danger to innocent civilians long after hostilities had ceased. The technology of those days produced devices that could remain in the ground only a short time before being rendered harmless by seepage.

The nature of land-mines makes them useful only for defending fortifications, hindering a pursuit, or spreading terror. In the Civil War, the Union army seldom found itself in a defensive position or in retreat, and the Federal government refrained from terrorist acts. Consequently, the development and use of these weapons remained almost exclusively with the Confederacy.

The Fort on the Shoal

Excerpted from the pamphlet
Fort Sumter
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Anyone visiting Fort Sumter today will find it difficult to believe that it could ever have ranked among the "most spectacular harbor defense structures to come out of any ear of military architecture." Wrecked by the Civil War, its walls reduced to half their original height, the present fort only slightly resembles the huge fortification that dominated the entrance to Charleston Harbor in the middle years of the 19th century.

Fort Sumter was one of a series of coastal fortifications built by the United States after the War of 1812 - a war that had shown the gross inadequacy of American coastal defenses. The fort belonged to what has come to be known as the Third American System of coastal defense, embodying "structural durability, a high concentration of armament, and enormous overall firepower." This system emerged after Congress set up a military Board of Engineers for Seacoast Fortifications in answer to President Madison's plea.

Under the unofficial direction of Brig. Gen. Simon Bernard, onetime military engineer to the emperor Napoleon I, the Board began surveying the entire coastline of the United States in 1817. The South Atlantic coast, "especially

regarded as less important," was not surveyed until 1821. One fortification report, covering the Gulf coast and the Atlantic coast between Cape Hatteras and the St. Croix River, had been submitted to Congress earlier that year, but it was not until the revised form of the report appeared in 1826 that much thought was given to permanently occupying the shoal in Charleston Harbor opposite Fort Moultrie. If the location were feasible, the Board reported, "the fortification of the harbor may be considered as an easy and simple problem." With the guns of the projected fort crossing fire with those of Fort Moultrie, the city of Charleston would be most effectively protected against attack.

Plans for Fort Sumter were drawn up in 1827 and adopted on December 5, 1828. In the course of that winter Lt. Henry Brewerton, Corps of Engineers, assumed charge of the project and commenced active operations. But progress was slow, and as late as 1834 the new fort was no more than a hollow pentagonal rock "mole" two feet above low water and open at one side to permit supply ships to pass to the interior. Meanwhile, the fort had been named Sumter in honor of Thomas Sumter, brigadier general commanding South Carolina militia during the Revolution.

Operations were suspended late in the autumn of 1834 when ownership of the site came into question. The previous May, one William Laval, a resident of Charleston, had secured from the State a rather vague grant to 870 acres of "land" in Charleston Harbor. In November, acting under this grant, Laval notified the representative of the U.S. Engineers at Fort Johnson of his claim to the site of Fort Sumter. In the meantime, the South Carolina Legislature had become curious about the operations in Charleston Harbor and began to question "whether the creation of an Island on a shoal in the Channel, may not injuriously affect the navigation and commerce of the Harbor." The following month, the Committee on Federal Relations reported that it could not "ascertain by what authority the Government had assumed to erect the works alluded to." Acting apparently under the impression that a formal deed of cession to "land" ordinarily covered with water had not been necessary, the Federal Government had commenced operations at the mouth of Charleston Harbor without seeking or receiving State approval to do so.

Laval's claim was invalidated the State's attorney general in 1837, but the harbor issue remained unresolved. It was November 1841 before the Federal Government received clear title to the 125 acres of harbor "land," although construction of Fort Sumter had resumed the previous January under the skillful guidance of Capt. A. H. Bowman, who pushed the work forward.

Bowman changed the original plans in several respects, the most important involving the composition of the foundation. Instead of a "grillage of continuous square timbers" upon the rock mass, he proposed laying several courses of granite blocks because he feared worms would completely destroy the wood; and palmetto, which might have resisted such attacks, did not have the compactness of fiber or the necessary strength to support the weight of the superstructure.

Work was difficult. The granite foundation had to be laid between periods of high and low tide, and there were times when the water level permitted no work to be done at all. The excessive heat of the Charleston summers was a recurrent problem; so was yellow fever. Much of the building material had to be brought in from the North. The

magnitude of the task is indicated by the quantities involved: about 10,000 tons of granite (some of it from as far away as the Penobscot River region of Maine) and well over 60,000 tons of other rock. Bricks, shells, and sand could be obtained locally, but even here there were problems. Local brickyard capacities were small and millions of bricks were required. Similarly, hundreds of thousands of bushels of shells were needed - for concrete, for the foundation of the first-tier casemate floors, and for use in the parade fill next to the enrockment. Even the actual delivery of supplies, however local in origin, was a problem, for then, as now, the fort was a difficult spot as which to land.

By 1860 Fort Sumter outwardly possessed a commanding and formidable appearance. Its five-foot-thick pentagonal-shaped brick masonry walls towered nearly 50 feet above low water and enclosed a parade ground of roughly one acre. Along four of the walls extended two tiers of arched gunrooms. Officers' quarters lined the fifth side - the 316.7-foot gorge. (This wall was to be armed only along the parapet.) Three-story brick barracks for the enlisted garrison paralleled the gunrooms on each flank. The sally port at the center of the gorge opened on a 171-foot wharf and a 25.5-foot-wide stone esplanade that extended the length of that wall.

Outward appearances, however, were deceiving. Unruffled decades of peace had induced glacial slowness and indifference in Washington. The fort was far from completed and, according to U.S. Army Surgeon Samuel W. Crawford who came to know the place well, "in no condition for defense." Eight-foot-square openings yawned in place of gun embrasures on the second tier. Of the 135 guns planned for the gunrooms and the open terreplein above, only 15 had been mounted. Most of these were 32 pounders; none was heavier. The barracks were unfinished and, where tenable, occupied by workmen. The officers' quarters were also unfinished, and a large number of wooden structures "of the most temporary character" occupied the parade. These "served as storehouses for the tools and material of the workmen, while all over the parade lay sand and rough masonry, and sixty-six guns with their carriages and 5,600 shot and shell."

By December 1860 time as well as money had run out, and the fort was about to take on a political significance far beyond the military function it was originally intended to serve. The long-smoldering sectional dispute between North and South had become like a power keg. And Fort Sumter was the fuse that would ignite it.

May Meeting

The May 2017 meeting of the
Colonel E. E. Ellsworth Camp #18
SUCW

Will be held on

Tuesday 16 May 2017

At the

Heritage Farmstead Museum, Plano, TX.

Moore's In The Civil War

by
Bob Moore

Virginia seceded in 1861. In 1863, the 40 western counties seceded from Virginia and gave birth to West Virginia and were admitted into the Union (giving rise to the sobriquet "Snakes" bestowed by the South).

It may be of some interest to reflect on the ordinary experiences of one family (Moore) arising from the consequences of this separation.

The Moore family, variously located in what is now Harrison County in the northern part of West Virginia, near the Pennsylvania border, consisted of six brothers and four sisters. Of the six brothers, four enlisted in the Union Army.

John, my grandfather, enlisted for three years in Company "C", 1st Regiment, West Virginia Volunteer Infantry on 6 January 1862.

William also enlisted on 1 January 1864 in Company "C", 1st Regiment, West Virginia Volunteer Infantry.

Thomas enlisted 26 December 1861 in Company "C", 10th Regiment, West Virginia Infantry.

Randolph enlisted on 11 November 1861 in Company "D", 10th Regiment West Virginia Infantry.

Randolph was carried as AWOL in May '62, but was later determined to be on detached duty to a Regimental Quartermaster Depot at Buckhannon, where he was promoted to Master Sergeant. In November '63, he was carried as a deserter in unit records. Again it was learned he had been captured by Confederate troops at Beverly, Virginia. He was "paroled" in a prisoner exchange and sent to College Green Barracks, Maryland, at the same time he was carried in unit records as a deserter from Camp Chase, Ohio. Again, records were correct to read, "Not Deserted. On special duty at Post Hospital." Randolph was hospitalized four times: (1) for fever, (2) pneumonia, (3) fever, and (4) carbuncle. Mustered out in March '65, married, and had eight children, so his experiences were not too debilitating.

Thomas was killed in the battle of Winchester. After an interminable volume of paperwork, his widow, Mary, was finally awarded a widow's pension of \$12.00 per month. She died in 1899, after rearing five children. Thomas' unit was under command of Major General Philip H. Sheridan at the time of his (Thomas') death. Other members of the command were Rutherford B. Hayes and Private William McKinley, both later Presidents of the United States.

John was wounded in action in November '64 and sent to a hospital at Sandy Hook, Maryland. He was discharged at Camp Hastings, Maryland, on 7 January 1865, at the expiration of his enlistment. John married Mary Ann Timms, my Great-great-grandmother, and had two boys and two girls, one of the boys being my Grandfather, Caleb Randolph Moore. John died in 1930 at the age of 97 when I was 7 years old. He was 3 years old when the battle of the Alamo took place. Such is the short span of history. John was discharged in the grade of Corporal.

William is somewhat of a mystery and details are sketchy. He died shortly after the war and it was believed that he died of war injuries. He enlisted on 1 January 1864, at the age of 19, in Company "C", 1st Regiment, West Virginia Volunteer Infantry, and was mustered out on 21 July 1865 at Cumberland, Maryland.

All the above is, for the times and circumstances, probably ordinary enough. But, it does illustrate the effects the confrontation imposed on any typical family and it was no doubt common to both sides.

It also brings home the direct consequences to succeeding generations:

They didn't have computers!

Fifth Wheel

by
Harry Dolbier

Senator Hannibal Hamlin liked his job just fine. The work stimulated him debating important issues, putting forward his anti-slavery views, promoting a transcontinental railroad and most of all providing jobs and doing favors for loyal party men.

In 1860, the 51-year-old Hamlin could look back on twelve years in the Senate, six in the House of Representatives, four in the Maine legislature, and a brief stint as governor of the Pine Tree State. Starting his political life as a Democrat, he broke with the party in 1856 over the slavery issue and cast his lot with the new Republican Party.

At their Chicago convention in 1860, the Republicans nominated Abraham Lincoln a former Whig from the West for president. The popular favorite for vice-president was Cassius Clay of Kentucky, but party leaders saw that a former Democrat from the Northeast would be a better choice. Senator Hamlin's friends and followers quickly went to work, even though he had asked them not to suggest his name, and they put their man over on the second ballot.

"I neither expected or desired it," Hamlin wrote to his wife, Ellen. "But it has been made and as a faithful man to the cause, it leaves me no alternative but to accept it." The Lincoln - Hamlin ticket went on to defeat the splintered Democratic Party in November a victory that set the stage for civil war.

A sign of the passions that the election had aroused came when a band of pro-Southern ruffians attacked Hamlin's train as it passed through Baltimore on the way to the inauguration. As the intruders stormed through the cars, searching for Lincoln, they woke Hamlin up. Finding out who he was, they left him alone and went on their way. Frustrated in their aim to accost Lincoln, they abandoned the train, leaving the vice-president-elect sitting up in his berth, ignored but unharmed.

The new vice-president soon discovered that his aversion to accepting the office had been well placed. He had no executive duties or powers whatsoever. Lincoln could have assigned Hamlin any responsibility he wished, but that was not the custom in those days. The vice-president's sole constitutional role was to preside over the senate, making Hamlin a mere observer of debates and votes in which he had once exercised a powerful voice. "I preferred to be on the floor of the Senate," he wrote in 1882, "but as it was there was no choice left to me." Had he been in Chicago when he was nominated, he asserted, he would have declined the honor. "A fifth wheel," he called

himself potentially useful, but without everyday function or purpose.

Hamlin's scant responsibilities left him a great deal of free time. He stayed at a hotel in Washington while the Senate was in session, then returned home to Maine. Sometimes he did not stay in the capital for the whole session. He even had enough spare time to enlist as a private in the Maine Coast Guards. The vice-president won promotion to corporal, and in the summer of 1864 he served a two-month tour of garrison duty at Fort McClary in Kittery, Maine, as camp cook chowder a specialty.

President Lincoln was friendly towards Hamlin and the two men often conferred. Hamlin was the first man to see the emancipation proclamation. Hamlin's views on war policy were more aligned to those of the congressional radicals than to those of Lincoln, and he repeatedly urged Lincoln to abolish slavery and enlist black soldiers. From time to time he visited the army in the field, and he toured the **USS Monitor** at Hampton Roads shortly after the famous battle. Still, he had no influence on events or policy.

The vice-president missed the opportunity of dispensing patronage that he had enjoyed so much as a senator. A firm Jacksonian, Hamlin strongly believed in the principle, "to the victor belong the spoils." For years he had found jobs and secured other favors for people, and his influence in the party reflected his ability to deliver. As vice-president, Hamlin had no patronage to dispense. All he could do and he did it often was to ask Lincoln, Secretary of War Stanton, and others in the administration for favors on behalf of political allies with modest success. "It seems to me," he lamented, "they do not heed my wishes or recommendations at all."

Before taking office, Lincoln had asked Hamlin to name a New England man for a seat in the cabinet. The vice-president-elect put forward the name of Gideon Welles and Lincoln appointed Welles as secretary of the navy. Hamlin and Welles later fell out when the highly judgmental Welles dismissed Hamlin as a political hack and influence peddler.

Two of Hamlin's sons served in the Union army. Cyrus, like his father an advocate of the use of black troops, commanded the 8th U.S. Colored Infantry and was breveted major general. The Republicans called themselves the Union Party in 1864, and when they convened in Baltimore to nominate candidates, the president held ironclad control over the proceedings. His own re-nomination was never in question, but Lincoln, the master politician, believed that the party would do better in the elections with a War Democrat on the ticket. He had nothing against Hamlin and did not want to hurt the vice-president's feelings, nor did he want to alienate the radicals and the abolitionists who strongly supported Hamlin. The president therefore worked behind the scenes to engineer the nomination of Andrew Johnson, a Democrat and the military governor of Tennessee, for the vice-presidency. Despite Hamlin's frustration with the office, the rejection hurt, though he did not learn for many years that Lincoln was behind it. But loyal party man that he was, he stumped for Lincoln and Johnson.

Hamlin hoped for re-election to the Senate in 1865, but the Maine legislature elected William Pitt Fessenden after Hamlin failed to get Lincoln to appoint Fessenden to the Supreme Court. After a time as port collector in Boston, Hamlin won re-election to the Senate in 1869, where he served until 1881. His friend, Secretary of State James G. Blaine, then appointed him Minister to Spain, a job that

permitted Hamlin to spend most of his two-year tenure sightseeing in Europe. At age 74, Hamlin gave up the political life and retired to the comforts of home and family in Bangor, where he passed away in 1891.

Civil War Quiz

by
Harry Dolbier

1. Match the general and the battle:

- | | |
|------------|---------------|
| a. Grant | z. Monocacy |
| b. Halleck | y. Nashville |
| c. Wallace | x. Corinth |
| d. Thomas | w. Pea Ridge |
| e. Sherman | v. Belmont |
| | u. Not listed |

2. What is a vedette?

- a. Headgear
- b. A surgical instrument
- c. A mounted sentinel
- d. An infantry maneuver
- e. A fortification

3. Who was Lincoln's first Secretary of War?

- a. Edwin M. Stanton
- b. Simon Cameron
- c. William H. Seward
- d. Winfield Scott
- e. Salmon P. Chase

4. Which woman was awarded the Medal of Honor?

- a. Mary Walker
- b. Clara Barton
- c. Belle Boyd
- d. Dorthea Dix
- e. "Mother" Bickerdyke

5. "Trent" of the "Trent Affair" was;

- a. A cuckolded husband
- b. A town in Virginia
- c. A British diplomat
- d. A British ship
- e. A Confederate courier

-
- 1. a - v ; b - x ; c - z ; d - y ; e - u
 - 2. (c) A mounted sentinel
 - 3. (b) Simon Cameron
 - 4. (a) Mary Walker
 - 5. (d) A British Ship