

3-2015

# Bowling Green Civil War Round Table Newsletter (March 2015)

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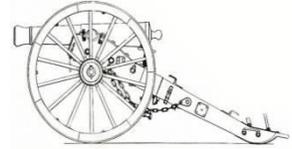
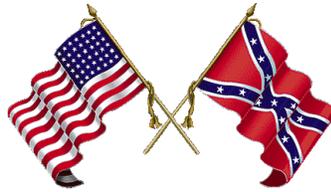
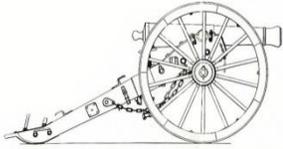
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## Recommended Citation

Folklife Archives, Manuscripts &, "Bowling Green Civil War Round Table Newsletter (March 2015)" (2015). *Bowling Green Civil War Round Table Newsletter*. Paper 20.  
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Founded March 2011 – Bowling Green, Kentucky

# Bowling Green Civil War Round Table

President –Tom Carr; Vice President - Jonathan Jeffrey; Secretary – Carol Crowe-Carraco; Treasurer – Robert Dietle;  
Advisors – Glenn LaFantasie and - Greg Biggs (Program Chair and President-Clarksville CWRT)

The Bowling Green KY Civil War Round Table meets on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of each month (except June, July, and December).

Email: [BGCWRT@wku.edu](mailto:BGCWRT@wku.edu)

Rm. 125, Cherry Hall, on the Campus of Western Kentucky University.

The meeting begins at 7:00 pm and is always open to the public.

**Members please bring a friend or two – new recruits are always welcomed**

## Our Program for March 19th, 2015

### Mark Hoffman, - "The First Michigan Engineers and Mechanics"

**Bio:** Mark Hoffman currently serves as the Chief Administrative Officer for the Michigan Department of Natural Resources. Previous to the DNR, Hoffman was deputy director of the Michigan Department of History, Arts and Libraries and also on the staff of the Michigan Bureau of State Lottery and the Michigan House of Representatives.

A life-long student of the American Civil War, he is the author of *Among the Enemy: A Michigan Soldier's Civil War Journal* (2013) and *My Brave Mechanics: The First Michigan Engineers and Their Civil War* (2007)– both published by Wayne State University Press.

Hoffman is a graduate of Michigan State University, with a degree in History. He and his wife Ann, another Spartan, live in Mason. They have two adult children -- son Patrick and daughter Alice – both Spartans.

**Synopsis:** As volunteer engineers for the Union army, the Michigan Engineers and Mechanics regiment was made up of skilled artisans, craftsmen, railroad men, and engineers whose behind-the-scenes work was crucial to the Union victory. Charged with maintaining and repairing the Union supply line in the western theater, the engineers constructed and repaired a staggering number of bridges, blockhouses, fortifications, railroads, and telegraph lines to keep the Union army functioning in the aftermath of battle.

The regiment also saw substantial direct combat action. Confederate guerillas and bushwhackers bent on

disrupting vital communication and supply lines routinely disregarded the usual rules of war to target the engineers. Their war was often fought behind the lines, engaged in small isolated units along railroads, telegraph lines, and river crossings.

Despite the challenges, the Michigan Engineers were recognized for many key accomplishments, including their work in keeping the railroad open south from Union supply depots in Louisville, the relief of Union forces trapped in Chattanooga, and destruction of rebel railroads during Sherman's march through Georgia and the Carolinas. The regiment's senior officers also held important posts within the Union military organization in the West and were instrumental in developing a coherent policy for the use of captured rebel railroads and infrastructure.

The largest portion of the work of this regiment was along the route Louisville – Nashville – Bridgeport – Chattanooga, with a particular emphasis in Middle Tennessee. Many of their most ambitious projects were along the Louisville and Nashville, Nashville and Chattanooga, and Nashville and Northwestern railroads. Their work along the Tennessee, Cumberland, Elk, Duck and other rivers was central to the ability of the Union forces to drive south into the heart of the Confederacy, culminating in their participation in Sherman's march. They also showed at Perryville, Lavergne and near Murfreesboro that they could also serve as infantry, standing in the line of battle against regular Confederate forces.

Almost 400 of the men in this regiment died during the war and most of them remain buried in Southern soil, the largest portion in national cemeteries at Cave Hill, Nashville, Murfreesboro, and Chattanooga. After the war, many of the Michigan Engineers officers remained in Tennessee, most of them involved in the reconstruction and operation of southern railroads.

### **Our Previous Meeting: January 26th, 2015**

Last month Ron Sydnor, the head of the Jefferson Davis National Historic Site, presented an interesting and thought provoking analysis of the life of Jefferson Davis. Focusing primarily on his early years and after the war, Ron conclusively demonstrates that the totality of Davis' life cannot be encapsulated by his four years as Confederate President. Ron cast Davis' prior positions as a war hero in the Mexican-American War, a leading proponent of states rights in the Senate, and his tenure as Secretary of War as proof of Davis' lasting impact on American history. The Bowling Green Civil War Roundtable would like to thank Mr. Sydnor for his excellent presentation, and extend an invitation for him to return in the future.

### **Upcoming Events** **The Atlanta Campaign Tour** **The Siege and Fall of Atlanta. March 25th through March 29th, 2015.**

Please join Greg Biggs and Robert Jenkins as they take you to the sites connected to the siege and capture of Atlanta, Georgia in 1864. From Johnston's River Line through Jonesboro, the tour will cover several key battles - Peachtree Creek, Atlanta, Ezra Church, Utoy Creek and Jonesboro. There will be several stops at each of the fields. Other sites include Shoupade Park and other portions of the River Line; the Chattahoochee River Crossings and Roswell, GA, an industrial center; the site of Johnston's headquarters where he was relieved of command; the site of the Potter House and Atlanta defenses and the site of Atlanta's surrender.

We will also see a few museums on this trip with direct Civil War and Atlanta connections including the Marietta Museum; the Atlanta History Center (with one of the three best Civil War collections in the nation); the Road to Tara Museum (which has only one of two remaining Sherman Neck-ties - the melted and bent rails

typical of this campaign) along with some "Gone With The Wind" sites including the museum in Marietta and the Margaret Mitchell House. We will visit the Atlanta Cyclorama as well as part of the Battle of Atlanta tour. On the way back home on Sunday, March 29th, we will tie the Atlanta campaign to Hood's Tennessee Campaign with a stop at the Allatoona Pass battlefield in north Georgia. This October 1864 battle was the first fight of the Tennessee Campaign. We will end the tour back in Franklin.

In the evening we will have great presentations by Atlanta historians. Scheduled to appear are Steve Davis, noted Atlanta Campaign author and historian; Gordon Jones of the Atlanta History Center and Charlie Crawford, president of the Georgia Battlefield Association.

This all kicks off like last year with an early afternoon reception on Wednesday, March 25th, at the Lotz House in Franklin, Tennessee before boarding the coach for the direct run to Marietta. We will be staying at the Hampton Inn - Marietta as last year. We decided to add a day this time to bring more to the tour from two battlefields and a couple museums which would be impossible to do in three days of touring.

About your guides: Greg Biggs has been a student of military history for over 45 years with many interests from ancient Greece to today's wars. He is president of the Clarksville, TN Civil War Roundtable and an officer of the Nashville and Bowling Green, KY CWRTs. He has studied the Atlanta Campaign for over 30 years and lived in Atlanta for several of those years. He gave his first Atlanta tour in 1993 and also does tours of several other western campaigns. Greg was one of the guides for the first portion of the Lotz House Atlanta tour in March 2014.

Robert Jenkins is an attorney from Dalton, GA whose office is next door to what was once General Joe Johnston's headquarters. He has spent many years studying the Atlanta Campaign and was a major contributor to saving several sites in and around Dalton, Georgia. His first book on the Battle of Peachtree Creek is the definitive study of that battle and his knowledge of that field is unsurpassed. His latest book, *To the Gates of Atlanta: From Kennesaw Mountain to Peach Tree Creek, 1-19 July 1864*, is due out any day. For those that took the tour in March 2014, Robert was a co-guide for the Dalton phase.

**No refunds unless the tour does not mature or unless you substitute someone in your place.** More detailed itineraries will be emailed approximately 2 weeks before departure.

There will be moderate walking, mostly at the various battlefields we visit and, of course, the museums.

### **Tour Package Includes:**

- \* Round trip luxury Motorcoach transportation from Franklin, Tn..
- \* Escort Services of Cavalier Tours
- \* Onboard Civil War Guides - Greg Biggs and Robert Jenkins
- \* Evening speakers - confirmed so far - author/historian Stephen Davis (author of two books on the campaign including the recent *What The Yankees Did To Us: Sherman's Bombardment and Wrecking of Atlanta*); Charlie Crawford (president, Georgia Battlefields Association). We have hopefully one more evening speaker (waiting for confirmation). Steve Davis will have his books for sale.
- \* 4 nights Accommodations
- \* Baggage handling

\* 4 Breakfasts

\* 2 Lunches

\* Admission to Atlanta History Center (One of the three best Civil War museums in the nation. They have a surviving Union Army transport wagon with travel honors painted on it from the campaigns in which it served amongst many other artifacts.)

\* Admission to Margaret Mitchell House

\* Admission to Marietta Museum

\* Admission to Gone With the Wind Museum

\* Admission to Atlanta Cyclorama (covers the Battle of Atlanta)

\* Oakland Cemetery (Then the location of Gen. Hood's headquarters during the Battle of Atlanta. We will visit the graves of several Confederate generals and Margaret Mitchell, Gone With The Wind author)

\* Admission to Road To Tara Museum (They hold one of the exceedingly few Sherman neckties - the bent railroad track that often represents this campaign - in the country).

**Rates are per person:** Single - \$685 Double (2 people) - \$555 per person Triple - \$510 per person (If you want to try and split a room with someone let Greg Biggs know at [Biggs@charter.net](mailto:Biggs@charter.net) and he will connect you.)

### **This Month in Civil War History**

- March 2<sup>nd</sup> 1865: Battle of Waynesborough occurs with Union forces under George Armstrong Custer victorious over CSA forces led by Jubal A. Early.
- March 2<sup>nd</sup> 1865: Robert E. Lee sends a letter to Ulysses S. Grant asking if it would be possible to meet and discuss the “differences between the North and South.” Lee’s first effort to bring Grant to the negotiating table was intended to save the CSA from dissolution.
- March 3<sup>rd</sup> 1865: The Freedman’s Bureau is established, an organization designed to ensure that the rights and liberties of former slaves were respected. The Freedmen’s Bureau’s existence was a source of hatred for postwar Southerners, and ceased to exist in 1872.
- March 4<sup>th</sup> 1865: Abraham Lincoln gives his second inaugural address, in which he calls for a peaceful reinstitution of the Southern states to the Union.
- March 11<sup>th</sup> 1865: William Tecumseh Sherman captures Fayetteville, North Carolina, continuing the march that would lead to the surrender of Joe Johnston’s Army of North Carolina on April 26<sup>th</sup> 1865.
- March 13<sup>th</sup> 1865: After previously refusing to consider the idea, the Confederate government approves the use of Black soldiers in the military. This move came far too late in the war to make any difference in the outcome.
- March 16<sup>th</sup> 1865: The battle of Averasborough occurs when CSA forces under William Hardee try to stall the Union advance, but are easily turned back by General Henry Slocum’s forces.
- March 19<sup>th</sup> 1865: the battle of Bentonville begins when William Hardee, D.H Hill, and A.P. Stewart’s forces work in concert to try and stop Slocum’s advance. Sherman soon reinforces Slocum’s forces, and

the Confederate army is forced to retreat. The heavy casualties that the CSA suffered would contribute to Johnston's decision to surrender to Sherman a month later.

- March 22<sup>nd</sup> 1865: Major General James Wilson [US] begins a "raid" in Selma which would result in the battle of Selma on April 2<sup>nd</sup>. Wilson's force successfully defeated CSA forces led by famed cavalry officer Nathan Bedford Forrest.
- March 25<sup>th</sup> 1865: The battle of Fort Stedman occurs when CSA forces under Major General John B. Gordon attempt to break through the Union siege of Petersburg. Despite early success Gordon's men are driven back by the XI Corp. under the command of Major General John G. Parke. This was the last real effort by the Confederates to break through the siege lines.
- March 27<sup>th</sup> 1865: The battle of Spanish Fort begins; this fort was a heavily fortified Confederate position, and the Union needed to remove it in order to secure Mobile, Alabama. Union forces under Major General E.R.S Canby laid siege to the fort, and nearly a month later Gen. Randall Gibson's forces retreated on April 8<sup>th</sup>, the day before Lee's surrender.
- March 27<sup>th</sup> 1865: President Lincoln holds a meeting with Generals Grant, Sherman, and Admiral David Porter aboard *The River Queen* at City Point.
- March 31<sup>st</sup>: CSA forces under General George Pickett successfully turn back Phillip Sheridan's cavalry during the battle of Dinwiddle Courthouse.

### Civil War Quotes

*"From whence shall we expect the approach of danger? Shall some trans-Atlantic military giant step the earth and crush us at a blow? Never. All the armies of Europe and Asia...could not by force take a drink from the Ohio River or make a track on the Blue Ridge in the trial of a thousand years. No, if destruction be our lot we must ourselves be its author and finisher. As a nation of free men we will live forever or die by suicide."* - Abraham Lincoln

*"It was not well to drive men into final corners; at those moments they could all develop teeth and claws."* - Stephen Crane, *The Red Badge of Courage*

*"She couldn't survey the wreck of the world with an air of casual unconcern."* - Margaret Mitchell, *Gone With the Wind*

*"If men were equal in America, all these Poles and English and Czechs and blacks, then they were equal everywhere, and there was really no such thing as foreigner; there were only free men and slaves."* - Michael Shaara, *The Killer Angels*

*"The consolidation of the states into one vast empire, sure to be aggressive abroad and despotic at home, will be the certain precursor of ruin which has overwhelmed all that preceded it."* - Robert E. Lee

*"Thousands of geniuses live and die undiscovered — either by themselves or by others. But for the Civil War, Lincoln and Grant and Sherman and Sheridan would not have been discovered, nor have risen into notice."* - Mark Twain

*"The story of the American Civil War is essentially one of human beings—Northerners, Southerners, Blacks, Whites, men, women— holding themselves accountable for the future of a nation."* - Aberjhani, *Journey through the Power of the Rainbow: Quotations from a Life Made Out of Poetry*

*"Sir, it is true that republics have often been cradled in war, but more often they have met with a grave in that cradle. Peace is the interest, the policy, the nature of a popular Government. War may bring benefits to*

*a few, but privation and loss are the lot of the many. An appeal to arms should be the last resort, and only by national rights or national honor can it be justified."* - Jefferson Davis

*"If forced to choose between the penitentiary and the White House for four years, I would say the penitentiary, thank you."* - William Tecumseh Sherman

*"We must make this campaign an exceedingly active one. Only thus can a weaker country cope with a stronger; it must make up in activity what it lacks in strength. A defensive campaign can only be made successful by taking the aggressive at the proper time. Napoleon never waited for his adversary to become fully prepared, but struck him the first blow."* - Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson

*What General Lee's feelings were I do not know. As he was a man of much dignity, with an impassible face, it was impossible to say whether he felt inwardly glad that the end had finally come, or felt sad over the result, and was too manly to show it. Whatever his feelings, they were entirely concealed from my observation; but my own feelings, which had been quite jubilant on the receipt of his letter, were sad and depressed. I felt like anything rather than rejoicing at the downfall of a foe who had fought so long and valiantly..."* - Ulysses S. Grant

*"Butler is branded a felon, an outlaw, an enemy of Mankind, and so ordered that in the event of his capture, the officer in command of the capturing force do cause him to be immediately executed by hanging."* - Jefferson Davis in response to Benjamin Butler's general order against the women of New Orleans

*Civil war? What does that mean? Is there any foreign war? Isn't every war fought between men, between brothers?* - Victor Hugo

*Sometimes we see the Civil War in movies and imagine these neatly aligned rows of men with muskets, walking in line to shoot each other. In reality the things that fascinated me were how absolutely ruthless and violent so many engagements were, how much suffering and how men were not prepared.* - Seth Grahame-Smith

*"But out of that silence rose new sounds more appalling still; a strange ventriloquism, of which you could not locate the source, a smothered moan, as if a thousand discords were flowing together into a key-note weird, unearthly, terrible to hear and bear, yet startling with its nearness; the writhing concord broken by cries for help, some begging for a drop of water, some calling on God for pity; and some on friendly hands to finish what the enemy had so horribly begun; some with delirious, dreamy voices murmuring loved names, as if the dearest were bending over them; and underneath, all the time, the deep bass note from closed lips too hopeless, or too heroic to articulate their agony...It seemed best to bestow myself between two dead men among the many left there by earlier assaults, and to draw another crosswise for a pillow out of the trampled, blood-soaked sod, pulling the flap of his coat over my face to fend off the chilling winds, and still more chilling, the deep, many voiced moan that overspread the field."* - Joshua Stewart Chamberlain

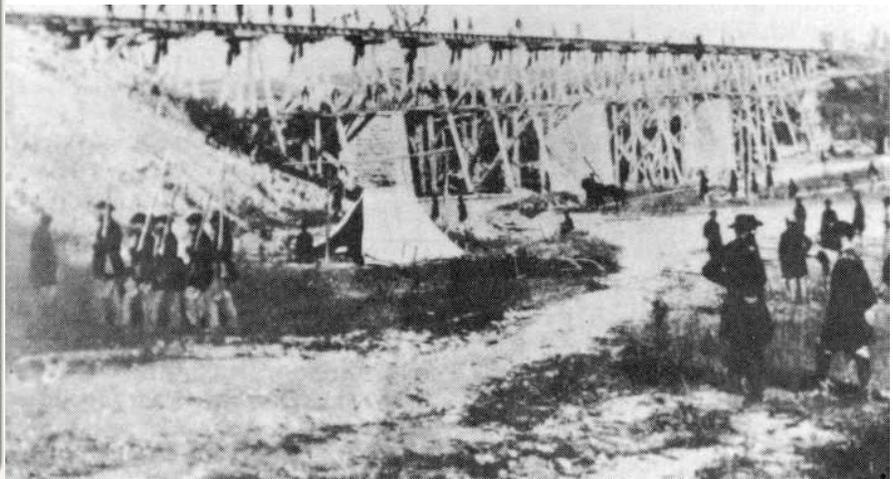
*"I pray that our Heavenly Father may assuage the anguish of your bereavement and leave you only the cherished memory of the loved and lost, and the solemn pride that must be yours to have laid so costly a sacrifice upon the altar of freedom."*

--- Abraham Lincoln to Mrs. Bixby of Boston, who lost five sons killed in battle.

### **UPCOMING EVENTS FOR THE BGCWRT**

- **April 16<sup>th</sup>, 2015** - TBA
- **May 14<sup>th</sup>, 2015** - Gus and Traci Belt, authors/historians - "Religion and the Army of Tennessee" (based on their book)

## A View of the 1<sup>st</sup> Michigan Engineers



Top Left: Surviving members of the 1<sup>st</sup> Michigan Engineers and Mechanics from Company E and F.

Top Right: Members of the 1<sup>st</sup> Michigan Engineers in Atlanta

Bottom Left: Photo of First Lieutenant Joseph C. Herkner

Bottom Right: Photo of the 1<sup>st</sup> Michigan Engineers and the railroad trestle that they constructed over the Elk River in Tennessee.

### **Keeping History Alive**

The following is the tentative wording of a planned historical marker from the Past Finders of Russellville, Kentucky:

Side 1: “A Union colonel with his 600 men came to Russellville, surprising a detachment of John Hunt Morgan’s confederate cavalry on Sept. 30, 1862. Both sides engaged in gunfire across the city, including this spot. 35 Confederates were killed and more wounded, and the rest retreated/

Side 2: The victorious colonel of the skirmish here was a 29 year old Hoosier named Benjamin Harrison. This was his first engagement in combat and earned him accolades. He marched with Sherman to Atlanta and became a Brigadier General. He later became the country’s 23<sup>rd</sup> President.”

If you would like to make a donation to help ensure that this important event is not forgotten then please contact David Guion at: [daguion@hotmail.com](mailto:daguion@hotmail.com)