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The Border Star

Official publication of the Civil War Round Table of Western Missouri, Inc.

April 2000

Vol. VIII No. 4

THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE OF WESTERN MISSOURI INC.

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NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Fran Mason 816-796-8954

MAILING ADDRESS

C.W.R.T. of W. Mo
4947 South Peck
Independence, MO 64055

TELEPHONE

Tim (816) 478-8833
Sonny (816) 628-9910
Beverly (816) 478-7648

ANNUAL DUES

Individual \$15.00
Family \$22.50
Student (under 21) \$5.00

MEETINGS

2nd Wednesday of month at 7 PM
Truman H.S. Library, 3301 S.
Noland Rd., Independence, MO
July - Annual Picnic
September - Cemetery Tour
December - Christmas Party

**VISITORS
WELCOME!**

NEXT MEETING

Wednesday, April 12, 2000

At

Truman High School - Library
3301 S. Noland Road
Independence, Missouri

Time: 7:00 p.m.

Program: Major General John Alexander
McClemdan, Politician in Uniform

Presenter: Dr. Richard Kiper, Professor
Kansas City Kansas Community College

Dr. Richard Kiper, Leavenworth Adjunct Professor at Kansas City Community College, is a graduate of West Point Class of 1967, retired Lt. Col. Of the U.S. Army. He received his Ph.D. in History from Kansas University. Dr. Kiper has taught at West Point at the U.S. Command and General Staff College. He will be speaking on his book "*Major General John Alexander McClemdan, Politician in Uniform.*" This book has been awarded the Fletcher-Pratt Award by the New York City CWRT for the best nonfiction Civil War book of 1999.

McClemdan, a democrat from Illinois, was commissioned in 1861 as Brigadier General. He had little of no experience in leadership of troops and was a political appointment. McClemdan led troops at Belmont, Fort Donnellson, Shiloh, Arkansas Point and Vicksburg. He was relieved of command during the Vicksburg campaign.

Dr. Kiper's book will be for sale at the meeting.

Refreshments to follow

Hope to see you there!

Remember... KC 150 Photos
are due by April 12th Meeting!

Come prepared to hand over your KC150 Project photos to Todd Randall!



SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

April 2000

- 12 7 PM – CWRT-WMo Meeting – Major General John Alexander McClemdan. Presenter: Dr. Richard Kiper, (See Bio on Page 1)
Truman High School Library,
3301 S. Noland Rd.

- 19 7 PM – Board Meeting – Truman Campus, Rm. 101

May 2000

- 6-7 10-5 (Sat.) and 11-3 (Sun.) – Civil War on the Border
Mahaffie Farm, 1100 Kansas City Rd., Olathe, KS
(For info. call (913) 782-6972)

- 10 7 PM – CWRT-WMo Meeting – Travelogue: VMI,
Andersonville, Valentine Museum
Truman High School

- 17 7 PM – Board Meeting – Truman Campus, Rm. 101

June 2000

- 10 Field Trip – Higginsville Confederate Veterans Home

- 14 7PM – CWRT-WMo Meeting – Jackson County
Archives – Program: TBA

- 21 7 PM – Board Meeting – Truman Campus, Rm. 101

July 2000

- 11 Picnic – Hill Park, 23rd St., Independence - (White
House – Smallwood Noland Home)

Upcoming Reenactments

April 28-30	Keokuk, Iowa (Max & Donna Daniels as the Lincolns & a couple portraying John Wilkes Booth)
May 13-14	Carthage
June 16-17-18	Wilsons Creek
August 19-20	Lone Jack
September 16-17	Lexington
October 14-15	Booneville
December 2-3	Prairie Grove (Arkansas)

Keeping CWRT Alive!

There are several of our members who are very active outside of the monthly meetings who continue to present Civil War history to a variety of organizations. Some are working on publications, etc. A few that come to mind are Sonny Wells, Beverly Shaw, Tim Cox, Jim Beckner, Faye Dennison, Toby Geise, and many others.

Let this editor know of your accomplishments for publication in future newsletters!

Trans-Mississippi Seminar– Great Fun!

The seminar sponsored by the Wilson's Creek National Battlefield, in Springfield last Saturday (4/1/00), was outstanding. Six speakers gave presentations on different topics dealing with the Civil War west of the Mississippi, followed by an assemblage of the speakers into a Panel Discussion on the "Greatest Generals" and "Worst Generals" of the Trans-Mississippi.

There were probably over 150 individuals in attendance, at the Greene County Library Center, with 11 members of the Civil War Round Table of Western Missouri present: Dori & Joel Semler, Charles & Claudetta McCorkendale, Mr. Calvert, Mr. Cox, Mr. Brown, Bonnie Sommerville, Faye Dennison, Harriett Lionberger, and Charlotte Tindall.

As with last year, not only were the speakers entertaining and informative, our group's members were afforded the chance to mingle and network with other Civil War groups and people interested in 19th century history. There was also the opportunity to view and purchase a variety of Civil War books (especially those that could be signed by the authors in attendance) and to obtain free literature on battlefield preservation, upcoming events, etc.

While we quite frequently focus on the Missouri/Kansas conflict in our Round Table monthly discussions, this seminar afforded us the opportunity to connect the generals, soldiers, battles, and events of our region into the larger scheme of Trans-Mississippi action. New Mexico, Arkansas, Colorado, Louisiana, and Texas were all discussed in part, in addition to Missouri/Kansas action.

"What were Price and McCullough doing in Arkansas (Pea Ridge, etc.) before Price's Raid into Missouri?, at the conclusion of the raid?," "How did Jeff Davis and Kirby Smith plan and command the Trans-Mississippi theater?," "How were the Southern soldiers from East Texas and Western Louisiana prepared for the type of battle they experienced in the plains, mountains, and deserts of New Mexico and Arizona?," "How did a respectable St. Louis physician, who was not a slave owner, become forced into service for the Confederacy to fight for self-government?" These were all questions that were addressed at the seminar.

Next week I'll attempt to summarize for you the speakers' brief comments regarding the generals of the Trans-Mississippi and address one of the questions above. For now, suffice it so say, I (and I'm sure the others from our group in attendance at the seminar) am looking forward to next year's event.

Submitted by: Tim Cox, President

Henry Wager Halleck

(1815-1872)

The following biography was taken from an internet site and this editor thought it interesting enough to share with members.

The Civil War career of the much-maligned Union commander in chief and chief of staff, Henry W. Halleck, was summarized by Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles as he "originates nothing, anticipates nothing...takes no responsibility, plans nothing, suggests nothing, is good for nothing." This harsh assessment was shared by many but is really unfair.

The New York native and West Pointer (1839) had been posted to the engineers and earned a brevet in Mexico. He also worked on fortifications, taught at the academy, and studied the French military. His writings included: *Report on the Means of National Defense*, *Elements of Military Art and Science*, and a translation of Henri Jomini's *Vie Politique et Militaire de Napoleon*. Due to his scholarly pursuits he became known as "Old Brains," but this sobriquet became derogatory during the Civil War.

Resigning as a captain in 1854, he became highly successful in the San Francisco law profession and helped frame the state's constitution. He maintained his interest in martial affairs through the militia and was recommended by Winfield Scott for a high post at the outset of the Civil War.

His assignments included: major general, USA (August 19, 1861); commanding Department of the Missouri (November 19, 1861-March 11, 1862); commanding Department of the Mississippi (March 13-September 19, 1862); commander in chief (July 11, 1862-March 12, 1864); chief of staff (March 12, 1864-ca. April 16, 1865); commanding Department of Virginia and Army of the James (April 16-June 28, 1865); and commanding Military Division of the James (April 19-June 27, 1865).

Succeeding John C. Fremont at St. Louis, he straightened out the mess that had been left behind. After Grant, his subordinate, had captured Forts Henry and Donelson, Halleck was rewarded with command of all the forces in the West. His enlarged command won victories at Pea Ridge, Island #10, and Shiloh. Taking immediate command of his three united field armies after the latter battle, he proved to be an incapable field commander in his only campaign. The advance on Corinth, Mississippi was so slow that the Confederates were able to withdraw at their leisure; Halleck was advancing at a rate of about one mile per day and then entrenching.

Made commander in chief shortly thereafter, he displayed tremendous administrative abilities, but many of his subordinates complained that he never gave adequate indications of what he wanted them to do or kept them informed of what other field leaders were doing. Halleck was also noted for a tendency to blame others for failures and was deeply resented by most top generals. When Grant took over as commander in chief, Halleck became the army's staff head and proved highly capable, if unpopular.

At the end of the war he commanded in Virginia and later on the Pacific. He died while heading the Division of the south at Louisville, Kentucky. (Ambrose, Stephen E., Halleck: *Lincoln's Chief of Staff*.)

Web Sites to Visit

<http://sunsite.edu/civil-war/> This site is the Civil War Homepage. Click on "General Resources", then Click "Poetry & Music of the War between the States or Music of the Civil War."

Coincidence ??

The following article, although not Civil War related, seems appropriate to reprint because of the nature of its content. It was reprinted from the Waterville Advance on June 6, 1968. Written by J.D. Webster, Sports Editor and reprinted later by the Minneapolis Daily American. The article is timely and thought provoking!

In May of 1919 at Dusseldorf, Germany, the Allied Forces obtained a copy of some of the "Communist Rules for Revolution." Nearly 81 years later, these rules are still being followed. Stop and think about the present day situation where you live—and all around our nation.

- A. *Corrupt the young; get them away from religion. Get them interested in sex. Make them superficial; destroy their ruggedness.*
- B. *Get control of all means of publicity, thereby:*
 1. *Get people's minds off their government by focusing their attention on athletics, sexy books and plays and other trivialities.*
 2. *Divide the people into hostile groups by constantly harping on controversial matters of no importance.*
 3. *Destroy the people's faith in their natural leaders by holding the latter up to contempt, ridicule and obloquy.*
 4. *Always preach true democracy, but seize power as fast and as ruthlessly as possible.*
 5. *By encouraging government extravagance, destroy its credit; produce fear of inflation with rising prices and general discontent.*
 6. *Foment unnecessary strikes in vital industries, encourage civil disorders and foster a lenient and soft attitude in the part of government toward such disorders.*
 7. *By specious argument cause the breakdown of the old moral virtues, honesty, sobriety, continence, faith in the pledge word, ruggedness.*
- C. *Cause the registration of all firearms on some pretext, with a view to confiscating them and leaving the population helpless.*

Quite a list, wasn't it? Stop and think how many of these rules are being carried out in this nation today?

Submitted by: Lucky Mason



Designers' Showhouse!

Remember May 11 when members of the Civil War Round Table of Western Missouri will act as docents at the 31st annual Designers' Showhouse at #96 Janssen Place in the Hyde Park neighborhood of Kansas City, MO. The hours will be from 4 PM (or as soon after work as you can arrive) until 8 PM. Volunteers will tour the house free of charge. Call Beverly Shaw to volunteer and arrange for carpooling to the house. Her number is (816) 478-7648.

Only One Quiz

1. _____ is the only man in blue or gray who enlisted as a private and surrendered as a lieutenant general.
2. _____ was the only former vice president to take up arms against the U.S.
3. _____ started out as a Confederate; became a "galvanized Yankee"; enlisted in the U.S. Navy after being discharged from the army and finally became a deserter in early 1865.
4. _____ was the only sitting U.S. Senator to die on the battlefield.
5. _____ was the only southern senator to remain in the senate and the youngest bridegroom who became president.
6. _____ accepted at least \$500 to be Abraham Lincoln's substitute, even though Lincoln wasn't subject to the draft.
7. _____ probably didn't take any of the photos credited to him because of his failing eyesight.
8. Reverend _____ became the only Confederate chaplain to be cited officially for gallantry in battle.
9. _____ was the only governor to die of Civil War battlefield wounds.
10. The _____ was the only brigade in gray to be designated by an officer's nickname.

Connie McQuain submitted this quiz and will give us the answers at the next meeting OR in the next newsletter. Thanks, Connie!



Final Reminder - dues are due! Any member not paying their dues by April 15 will be dropped from the mailing list commencing in May.

Did You Know ...

That the Leawood Lions Club has adopted the old Oxford Cemetery, west of Watts Mills. It has been cleaned up, fenced, and is now called the Linwood Pioneer Cemetery.

"Preservation Prevails!"

Letter to President Lincoln, dated Sept. 5, 1864

I will publish in two parts a letter written to President Abraham Lincoln by Capt. Terrence Kirby. Capt. Kirby is making a plea for the release of his two grandsons from a prison in Indiana. This editor, descended from Capt. Kirby. I found a hand-written copy of this letter in my Kirby family file.

Capt. Terrance Kirby came to Kentucky in the early days and settled on Drake's Creek. He received a land grant from the government for his service in the War 1812. A footnote states that "...this is one of the most remarkable letters ever addressed to Pres. Lincoln or any other President. It was bought (the letter) 15 or 20 years ago (would have been sometime in the 1940's or 1950's) in a book store in Washington, by W.M.H. Townsend, the noted connoisseur of Lincolnian's. The original letter was borrowed from him by the Coulter(sp?) - Journal of Louisville, KY and published. The evidence is that Capt. Kirby delivered this letter to Pres. Lincoln personally. There is no evidence of Lincoln granting him the favor sought. But we quickly want to believe that he did. In this letter the "Old Hero" did not rest his remarkable case upon his own say, so he obtained 2 sets of supporting signatures. While the first group noted that they often had heard Capt. Kirby's story, the second group inferentially assured Pres. Lincoln it would well be worth his time to grant the "Old Hero" an audience."

The letter as copied (with incorrect spelling) seems to be incomplete in one part, but the contents of what is written are worth sharing.

"To the honorable Abraham Lincoln, Pres. Of the United States at Washington, D.C."

The undersigned respectfully, petition your honor that some 12 months ago, my Gran sons, William Bradley and Van Fulgium, was captured by the federal soldiers and are at this time in prison at Camp Morton, Indiana. At the time they were captured they were on their way home, having served out their time in the Rebele army and was likely to be conscripted which they were very much opposed to. They were both disieras to take the Amesta oath, give bond, and return to live as quit sitizans.

They are granchildren of the "old Hero" that served his country in the War of 1812.

At this point, the letter continues with the "Old Hero" telling of his own adventures during the War of 1812. (To be continued next month).