



THE DRUM & BUGLE

Voice of the Rappahannock Valley Civil War Round Table

Rappahannock Valley Civil War Round Table Newsletter
July 2016, Volume 13, Issue 7

Speaker: Ed Bearss'
Topic: "Major General Patrick Cleburne"
When: Monday, July 11, 2016
Location: Brock's Riverside Grill
Times: Social Begins 6:00 pm, Dinner 6:45 pm, Meeting Begins 7:30 pm

Abstract on Ed Bearss', our Scheduled Speaker for Monday, July 11, 2016 By Jim Smithfield

Edwin Cole Bearss is today the nation's premier storyteller of the Civil War. We strongly encourage all of our members to sign a petition to help the campaign to award our July speaker, i.e., Ed Bearss', the Congressional Gold Medal. This is in recognition of his many contributions to the preservation of American Civil War history and his continued efforts to bring our nation's history alive for new generations. Please go to the Civil War Trust website to learn how to sign on in support of this effort. Ed was born and raised in the state of Montana. Serving in the *3rd Marine Raider Battalion*, Ed was badly wounded by machine gun fire at *Suicide Creek, New Britain in World War II*. After a lengthy recuperation, Ed went on to earn a bachelor's degree at Georgetown University and a master's degree from Indiana University. After a visit to the Shiloh National Military Park both demonstrated the importance of merging the study of the Civil War with an examination of the actual ground upon which the soldiers fought, and also sparked his interest in a career with the *National Park Service*. Ed began a 40 year career at Vicksburg culminating with his becoming the Chief Historian of the service in 1981, and the special assistant to the director of the National Park Service in 1994-95.

Ed's visit to Shiloh was made in conjunction with his desire to see some of the battlefields where the subject of his master's thesis, Patrick R. Cleburne, had been engaged. Ed will speak on Major General Patrick R. Cleburne, when he addresses our round table. Cleburne is widely recognized as the most talented division commander in the *Army of Tennessee* and as one of the very best at that level throughout the entire Confederacy. Cleburne was born on St. Patrick's Day in 1828, in County Cork, Ireland. Upon failing the test as a druggist that he had apprenticed for Cleburne joined the British army. Ultimately Cleburne along with three of his siblings came to America and he eventually became a druggist in Helena, Arkansas, and later a lawyer. Cleburne led one of the largest brigades in the Confederate army at the *Battle of Shiloh* and from then on he was conspicuous in battle. On November 30, 1864, Cleburne was one of six Confederate general officers killed in the *Battle of Franklin*, he was leading his division.

"Reminiscences of War: Memoirs of the 33rd United States Colored Troops"
Presented by Megan McNish
Review of the RVCWRT June 2016 program by Greg Mertz

While Megan McNish was taking a course at Gettysburg College entitled *Aftermath*, which took a comparative look at how the Civil War soldiers remembered their wartime experiences, Megan wanted to select a project pertaining to the *United States Colored Troops*. Her search for material first led her to the memoirs of Susan King Taylor, a laundress with the *33rd United States Colored Troops*. While Taylor's memoirs were rich and vivid, McNish was afraid that it might not have included enough material. McNish did not want to pass on the Taylor memoir though, so she looked to see if she might find an additional memoir that originated from the same regiment. In her search she discovered that the white commanding officer of the regiment, Colonel Thomas Wentworth Higginson, also had written a memoir. Furthermore McNish found it to be a wonderful document to contrast with Taylor's. The comparison of the two memoirs shows dramatic differences in the ways that class, race and gender caused each of them to view the world in which they shared. Most significantly it showed how their different post-war experiences during the early reconstruction era affected how they each looked back at the significance of the Civil War.

Higginson was born into a family of privilege. He was the youngest graduate in his Harvard class and became a well-known militant abolitionist. By 1848, he was a prominent speaker in favor of abolition and he was a member of John Brown's "Secret Six" supporting Brown's 1859, Raid on Harpers Ferry. During the summer of 1862, Higginson joined the Union army, recruiting men that became part of the white 51st Massachusetts. That fall, however, Higginson was asked to command the *1st South Carolina Volunteers*, this was a black regiment that was later re-designated as the *33rd United States Colored Troops*. It was the first African-American unit to serve during the Civil War. In 1864, Higginson had to resign due to the wounds he had suffered leading the regiment into combat. After the war ended, Higginson attached himself to numerous other social justice causes, including the women's rights movement, the worker's rights movement, and the temperance movement. In 1870, Higginson published his Civil War memoirs, and he lived until 1911.

Susan King Taylor led a life that was dramatically different than Higginson. Taylor was born a slave in Georgia in 1848. She lived with her grandmother in Savannah, Georgia where she had the unusual opportunity to learn to read and write. In April 1862, at the age of 14, she boarded a Union gunboat, where her education was noticed by the officers. Soon she organized a school to teach African-Americans. While teaching on St. Simons Island, she met and married Edward King, a member of the *1st South Carolina*. Her uncle was also a member of the regiment, and Susan King decided that she too would join the unit as a laundress, nurse and teacher. Edward died in 1866, just before the birth of their first child. In 1870 she moved to Boston, working there as a servant, and marrying Russell Taylor. In 1902, Taylor self-published her memoir, she died ten years later in 1912.

In comparing the two memoirs, there are three important distinctions that stand out. One important distinction is the time element – this is the distance between the war and when the memoirs were written. Higginson published his memoirs just five years after the war, whereas Taylor drew on more than 30 years of post-war experiences before writing hers. The second distinction is the manner in which each viewed the Civil War – and this may again be impacted by the time element as cited above. Higginson wrote his at a time that included the occupation troops throughout the south, preliminary efforts were being made at Reconstruction and there was the hope that the problems with Reconstruction policies might somehow be solved. Taylor wrote during a time when it was obvious that Reconstruction efforts had been unsuccessful and the promises made to African-Americans went unfulfilled. The third, but most important factor was the differences in respect to their class, race and gender. Thus, these two memoirists had dramatically dissimilar life experiences because of these ethnological characteristics.

Higginson wrote more about the fighting than Taylor, and she hardly discussed any aspect of the suffering of soldiers. The manner in which they viewed each other in their memoirs is rather telling. Taylor asked Higginson to write an introduction for her memoirs, and the colonel called her “*an exceptional person among the colored laundresses.*” Yet, Higginson does not so much as even mention Taylor in his own memoirs. It could be that Taylor was so young, between the ages of 14 and 16, during their common service. It could also have been the fact that Taylor was not a soldier, so that Higginson did not see fit to write about her at all. Higginson, conversely, shows up very prominent in Taylor’s memoirs. She is typically complimentary of the colonel, stating that all of the troops were sorry to see him go.

Although Colonel Higginson was an avid abolitionist, his writings show definite signs of racism. Higginson referred to his soldiers as “*young barbarians*” and indicated that they had “*childlike vices,*” but that otherwise they were like other men.

Colonel Higginson, was someone who favored abolition, he accepted the task of commanding black troops and then in writing soon after the Civil War before the shortcomings of Reconstruction were obvious. He took a great deal of pride in his Civil War contributions and accomplishments. He wrote that as one who had served with the USCTs, “*whatever dignity or sacredness the memories of the war may have to others, they have more to us.*” He was obviously very proud not just of his Civil War service, but that he had served with the USCTs. Perhaps it was because he wrote so soon after the war and perhaps also because he had moved on to other causes. Those other causes that he supported included, women’s rights, worker’s rights, and the temperance movement. However, Higginson did not comment on furthering the work of Reconstruction or freedmen’s rights nor did he otherwise take a critical assessment of any of the efforts to continue the work that the Civil War had begun.

Taylor, on the other hand, had witnessed firsthand more than thirty years of the failings of the Reconstruction process. Even living in such a progressive community as Boston, which shielded Taylor somewhat from the horrors of Reconstruction, she had still become terribly bitter. She felt betrayed by a nation which had neglected to live up to its promises to the former slaves and she questioned whether the Civil War had actually changed anything. Her most profound post-war experience came from a railroad trip to Louisiana in which she hoped to bring back home her dying son to care for him. Two white men questioned her very presence on the train South, and when she told a black porter of this experience, she was told that black people had no rights in the South and that lynching’s were common place there.

Taylor articulately expressed her profound and heartfelt disappointment that the son of a man who fought to preserve the union under the United States flag would be denied the ability to be brought home to die because he was a negro. In her chapter titled “*Thoughts on Present Conditions*” Taylor asked some very pointed questions. One question she asked, “*Was the war in vain?*” her second question “*Has it brought freedom in the full sense of the word?*” Taylor also noted that, “*In this land of the free we are burned, tortured and denied a fair trial.*”

Remember: Please contact Bob Jones to order your Dinner in advance

To Confirm Your Reservations: Telephone 540-399-1702 or e-mail cwrtddinner@yahoo.com

**We know the Union had black soldiers, but were there black Confederate soldiers?
(Part two of two)**

**There was of course John Noland who is often referred to as
“The Black Confederate”**

“The Black Confederate”



The above Photo was taken in 1875, at the Ninth reunion of Quantrill's Raiders
(John Noland is shown in the front row, off to the very right)

How Many?

Debate continues today over the actual role of African Americans who served the Confederacy and it has not subsided. Official Army records, newspaper articles, veterans accounts, and other types of documents strongly suggest that large numbers of both slaves and free black men served as Southern allies. In many cases, they obviously served as soldiers or sailors for the Confederacy.

Prior to William Clarke Quantrill and his hundreds of Missouri marauders raid on the town of Lawrence, Kansas in 1863, John Noland (a free black man) was sent alone, ahead to scout the town. Throughout the war, Noland served as Quantrill's primary scout, yet he was just one of many blacks who served in various Confederate units during the Civil War. Noland joined Quantrill after his family in Missouri had been abused by Kansas guerrillas, called Jayhawkers. The Jayhawkers mostly raided into Missouri and were later mustered into Union forces. Photographs of Quantrill's raiders as they attended reunions after the Civil War, show Noland sitting prominently with the white members of the group. When Quantrill and his initial troops were mustered in and took the oath, Nolan (a black man) also took the Confederate oath.

In the “1999” Hollywood movie *“Ride with the Devil,”* John Noland's life was utilized as the primary basis for the character *Daniel Holt*, a free black man who along with his former owner chose to ride and fight with Quantrill's Raiders.

Truthfully, I find it difficult to determine how many black men actually fought with the Confederate forces. This may in part be because so many Confederate records were deliberately destroyed. One thing that I've also found, is that some historians estimate upwards of seven (7%) to nine (9%) percent of all Confederate forces may have been made up of various ethnic minorities. For this they cite a number of sources for this belief, including diaries, letters, private publications and of course the *“Official Records of The War of the Rebellion”* along with the writings of many modern day black scholars. Truthfully, there is today much evidence that a number of black men (free and slave) fought for the Confederate South, but how many? Today, it would only be a guess! An obvious number appears to be between 3,500 to 5,000 black men. Any job that would have required a white soldier to do and was done by a black man, slave or free aided the Southern armies, it of course, freed white soldiers for other duties . . .



Among Quantrill's loyal followers was a free black man, his name was John Noland! Noland became Quantrill's primary scout for all things! In fact, he alone scouted the town of Lawrence, Kansas prior to the Quantrill's 1863, raid. Noland had joined Quantrill's raiders after he'd witnessed physical abuse being done to his family from *Pro-Union Kansas Jayhawkers*. Various post-war photos show Nolan sitting with his former comrades at reunions of the Quantrill's Raiders (see *previous photo*). The Union had once offered Noland \$10,000.00 to turn in Quantrill – he refused. Noland was known to be a man's man and he was loyal to a fault . . .

John Noland's grave

If you'll notice, Noland's grave marker states he was a Quantrill Scout and died in 1908.
(*Not that he was part of the Quantrill Raiders*)

Who we are?

The *Drum and Bugle Newsletter* is published monthly, by the Rappahannock Valley Civil War Round Table, Post Office Box 7632, Fredericksburg, VA 22404. Each month, The Drum and Bugle newsletter is also placed on our web-site, www.RVCWRT.org. Yearly membership dues are still just \$30.00 for individuals, \$40.00 for families, and it's still only \$7.50 for students. Membership is open to anyone interested in the study of the Civil War and the ongoing preservation of Civil War sites.

The RVCWRT Executive Committee:

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Post Office Box 7632
Fredericksburg, Virginia 22404