THE BULLETIN OF THE PUGET SOUND CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

VOLUME 9 NUMBER III OCTOBER 1994

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Thanks: A special thanks to member "Skip" Bennett for his interesting talk about Civil War Photography. Skip went to great lengths to present an entertaining talk and the slide show illustrating his lecture was enjoyed by the 52 members in attendance. Also a tip of the hat to Jeff Dygert for bringing in the display of Civil War Photos.

Next Meeting: Thursday October 13, 1994. 6 PM Social Hour, Dinner at 7 PM. at The Yankee Diner, 5300 24th Ave NW, Seattle. Write your menu choice, name and the names of any guests and mail it ASAP.

SURE TO DIE

An amusing thing occurred in the Twenty-fourth Ohio. On one occasion a soldier, in passing to the lower part of the encampment saw two others from his company making a rude coffin. He inquired who it was for.

"John Bunce," said the others.
"Why," replied he, "John is not dead yet. It is too bad to make a man's coffin when you don't know if he is going to die or not."
"Don't trouble yourself," replied the others.
"Dr. Coe told us to make his coffin, and I guess he knows what he gave him!"

MENU: Pot Roast or Teriyaki Chicken served with Caesar Salad, Biscuits, Fresh Vegetables, Potatoes or Rice with Coffee or Tea. Price $16.00 per person.

Program: October 13, 1994 Michael Vouri, Curator of the Whatcom Museum of History and Art, will talk about the career of George E. Pickett in the Pacific Northwest, focusing on his years in Bellingham. This topic is the subject of an extensive Pickett exhibit coming to the Whatcom Museum. Mr. Vouri's talk will feature slides and artifacts.

Video Watch: Civil War Generals is a 3 volume set of videos that traces the lives of the Civil War's most colorful and brilliant military minds. Noted historians provide insight into the strategy and tactics of Stonewall Jackson, Robert E. Lee and Ulysses S. Grant. Historical phonographs and artwork highlight the volumes. VHS FUS-2933 $59.98.


Dues: 1994-95 membership dues are now payable. $15.00 per individual and $20.00 for couples. For new members there is a $5.00 initiation fee which covers the cost of a name tag. If you have not paid yet, please mail your check [payable to PSCWRT] to George Hood, 7105 156th Place NE, Redmond WA 98052.

Civil War Booknotes: Contains an article by our October speaker Michael Vouri as well as listing books on George Pickett.

Silent Auction: Our Third Annual Silent Auction will be held at the October Meeting. We have had great success in raising funds for Battlefield preservation with this event. If you have special items that you would like to donate to this worthy cause, please plan on
BRINGING IT TO THE NEXT MEETING. IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS PLEASE FEEL FREE TO CONTACT MARC DUVALL, WHO IS IN CHARGE OF THE AUCTION THIS YEAR.

DISPATCH FROM THE PRESIDENT

Major Randolph Jones Barton, CSA accompanied the initial truce flag to Appomattox Court House which was received by Major General George Armstrong Custer, USA. On Confederate Memorial Day in Winchester, VA many years later Major Barton in an address spoke eloquently of what he termed the "Appomattox contract."

... But the end had come. Human beings could do more than our army had done, and there and there at Appomattox the scene changed. An overriding Providence so decreed. Common honesty then and there required that we should give our whole soled allegiance to the United States or quit the country. This was the contract and I recognized no qualification to it. And so from that day to this I have kept the faith. From that day to this I have sought to incorporate myself and my children into the body politic of the United States as if I had never had toward it a hostile feeling... and yet I must confess that the unfolding of the Stars and Stripes does not thrill me with patriotic feeling. I saw it advance upon my people for the first time in my life at Manassas. I saw it then the emblem of all that I hated. I can forgive it all but simple truth requires me to declare that I cannot forget it...

... But I inculcate in my children, love of country... I can teach my children to sustain it right or wrong in preference to any other country. But if patriotism means that I must forget my Confederate people living or dead, then I am not a patriot...

... But a generous North does not require us to do this. It does not expect us to do it. There is no difficulty in pursuing an honest life in our relations to the past and the present. There is no difficulty in keeping the Appomattox Contract; all that is necessary is to be a true Confederate...

Such men as this did build and so sustain this grand country we call our own after that most terrible of civil wars.

From: DEFEND THE VALLEY: A Shenandoah Family in the Civil War by Margareta Barton Cold

DONALD LARSON

HISTORICAL PRESERVATION: The Museum of the Confederacy in Richmond, Virginia is seeking help in a new program to conserve its extensive collection of over 500 Confederate national, regimental and company flags. The Museum has raised $50,000 and received another $25,000 grant from the Institute of Museum Services, but seeks to raise another $25,000 to construct a flag storage room. Construction of this new storage area is just the first step in a major restoration and conservation effort to preserve the flags. If you would like to receive additional information write to The Museum of the Confederacy, 1201 East Clay Street, Richmond, Virginia 23219. Attn: Rebecca Rose, Curator.

This Month in the Civil War: October 13, 1863 was a good day for the Republican party in elections held in Ohio, Pennsylvania, Indiana and Iowa. After the setbacks of the previous year, the Union [or Republican] candidates won important governor elections in the first two states. War Democrat John Brough defeated decisively Clement L. Vallandigham, the noted Copperhead, for Governor in Ohio, while Andrew Curtin was reelected in Pennsylvania.

Music: Rhino Records Inc. has reissued on a CD, 24 Civil War songs by The Cumberland Three entitled Songs of the Civil War. [Rhino R2 70739 $14.95] While the selections on this album include some familiar favorites as The Yellow Rose of Texas, Goober Peas, or the Battle Hymn of the Republic, some of the best songs performed by the group are humorous renditions of Story of the Lamb, Song of the Hungry or The Coward. While the Cumberland Three may not be familiar to many of our members today, they may recognize one member of this 1960 group, John Stewart, who went on to greater fame as a member of The Kingston Trio.

Research Opportunities: We are fortunate to have in Seattle a branch of the National Archives, located on 6125 Sand Point Way, NE in Seattle. Regular operating hours are Monday through Friday 7:45 to 4:00 P.M. with extended hours on the 1st and second Tuesday evenings of the month [5:00 - 9:00 P.M.]. The Archives center has a number of microfilms relating to the Civil War including a General Index to Pension Files, Confederate States Army Casualties, and Consolidated Index to Compiled Service Records of Confederate Soldiers. 25% of Microfilm readers can be reserved. Additional information will be handed out at our October meeting.

UPCOMING MEETINGS: Mark Nielsen in November will discuss how Civil War veterans viewed their war experience. In December Dr. James Orcutt will talk about George E. Pickett and the Pig War. For January 1995, John W. Hinds will discuss the Civil War in eastern North Carolina, while in February Emille Wadell will talk on the Christian Commission. March 6, 1995 [a Monday] William Brooksher will present a talk on Wilson's Creek. April will find Dr. Earl J. Hess of Lincoln Memorial University talking on Pea Ridge.
George Pickett is news again.

With the release of Turner Entertainment's Gettysburg, the legendary Confederate general once again gallops through the ranks of his division urging them to remember they are from "Old Virginia." The division moves in perfect formation across a mile of open field and is promptly mowed down like ripe wheat.

Pickett's Charge lives.

It's hard to believe a connection exists between such lasting fame and a simple balloon-frame house at F and Bancroft streets in the heart of Bellingham's Old Town District.

But it does. In August 1856, Capt. George Pickett and 56 officers and enlisted men of Company D, U.S. Ninth Infantry Regiment, arrived on the shores of Bellingham Bay to build both a fortress at the mouth of the Nooksack River and a military road from the fort to the fledgling village of Whatcom.

The native Virginian [born 1825] and Mexican War hero - he was cited in dispatches and breveted a captain for carrying his company colors over the wall during the assault on Chapultepec -- remained in Northwest Washington from then until the outbreak of the Civil War in 1861. Along the way, he married [common law] a Native American woman and fathered a son, James Tilton Pickett; translated and created a written form of the Chinook Trading language; and nearly started a war between the United States and Great Britain over San Juan Island.

In light of this renewed attention, the Whatcom Museum will take a closer look at Pickett and his era in the exhibit, George Pickett and the Frontier Army Experience, scheduled Dec. 17, 1994 to April 9, 1995 in the museum's Haggen Gallery. The museum will use maps, drawings, photographs, reproductions of 1850's-period uniforms and equipment, and his place in the frontier army in Bellingham and the greater 19th century American West.

The museum also is making requests from the collections of the Museum of the Confederacy, Virginia Historical Society, San Juan National Historic Park, Turner Entertainment and other organizations for Civil War-era uniforms and personal effects; paintings, photographs and other objects pertaining to James Tilton Pickett, in museum collection and from the Washington State Historical Society, the Oregon Historical Society and the Washington State Capital Museum.

The exhibit will first focus on the construction of Fort Bellingham and how it related to other frontier forts that were erected in the Far West during the period. It will then examine the Pig War of 1859, an altercation on San Juan Island that exacerbated a dispute over the San Juan Islands between the United States and the British. It was to underscore the need for Fort Bellingham and its soldiers long after the threat of Indian raids diminished.

Pickett will then be followed east after he resigned his commission and, as with
many other West Point-trained Virginians - - among them Robert E. Lee, A. P. Hill, Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson, and Jeb Stuart - - cast his lot with the Confederacy. His career as a general officer and division commander was fraught with controversy, the "charge" on the third day at Gettysburg being the only incident for which he is remembered - - but what an incident! His name was muddied for a time when he was indicted for war crimes immediately following the war, but none of that mattered. Pickett embodied the charge and the charge embodied Pickett.

After a two-year, self-imposed exile in Montreal, he returned to Norfolk, Va., where he lived out his days selling insurance. He died at age 50 in 1875, after which his young wife, LaSalle Corbeil Pickett, spent the next 56 years venerating [and clearing] his name. By the time of her death in 1931 she was alternately known as the "Mother of the Lost Cause" and the "Child Bride of the Confederacy."

Among a few of the questions to be explored: Who was the real man behind myth and folklore? Why George Pickett in Bellingham? What did he and his company of soldiers have in common with other frontier garrisons of the period? Was he the "great captain" in three wars as portrayed in local literature? What was his role in the Pig War? What about the Military Road, the Pickett bridge and Fort Bellingham? How much was he involved in each?

In fleshing out the man and his era from Northwest Washington to Cemetery Ridge, George Pickett and the Frontier Army Experience approaches the heart of the frontier and Civil War military experience. Moreover, it offers a revealing exploration of how Western Culture manufactures its heroes and safeguards their names through time.

ADDITIONAL READING

There is no adequate modern biography of George Pickett, but brief articles which reflect current scholarship on the noted Virginian can be found in the new Encyclopedia of the Confederacy [Vol. 3, Pp. 1208-1209] and in Volume 5 of The Confederate General edited by William C. Davis. Other works relating to Pickett can be found listed below.


While Civil War Books finds this "too confined to be a good division history" it does included "stimulating passages on Pickett and Richard B. Garnett."


The first work by Mrs. Pickett is a highly partisan defense of her husband, "too sympathetic to be of intrinsic value" and according to some historians mostly based on Harrison's earlier work. The second work contains 50 "supposed" letters written by Pickett, which modern scholarship now suggests were fabricated by his wife. [See Appendix B in Stewart's Pickett's Charge]


Two excellent modern studies of the action which made Pickett's name synonymous with the Lost Cause. 2/3'rd's of the Georg book is a descriptive roster of Pickett's Division.