Thanks to Richard Shenkman for sharing his experience in making his new television series "Myth America." We look forward to seeing these programs about the "real story of American history" next fall when they air on The Learning Channel.

NEXT MEETING

Thursday May 9, 1996 at the Yankee Diner. 6 PM Social Hour with dinner served at 7 PM. Chicken & Dumplings or Brochette of Beef served with Caesar Salad, Biscuits, fresh vegetables, potatoes or rice along with coffee or tea. $16.00 per person. Please write your menu choice, name and the name of any guests on the enclosed postcard and mail it ASAP.

Program

Our May speaker will be the distinguished historian Suzanne Lebsock. Her study on The Free Women of Petersburg: Status and Culture in a Southern Town 1784-1860 won the 1985 Bancroft Prize. Professor Lebsock is also a recipient of a McArthur Foundation Award. She is currently doing research on post war Southern society and will speak on the impact of a sensational murder trial in Virginia. Her husband is current University of Washington President, Richard McCormick.

Military Wit

While the Fifty-sixth Alabama Regiment was at Manchester its colonel, L. T. Woodruff visited the pickets. Coming up to one of Quarles's men, stationed at his post, he commenced questioning him as to his duty. Colonel - "Suppose a body of men were to approach you, what would you do?" Vedette- "I would halt them and demand the countersign." Colonel - "Suppose they wouldn't halt or give the countersign?" Vedette - "I would shoot at them." Colonel - "Then what would you do?" Vedette - "I'd form a line." Colonel - "Line! What kind of line would you form?" Vedette - "A bee line for camp!" The colonel made a bee line to the next post.

Civil War Book Notes this month is on the best published diaries by elite Southern women.

NEW BOOKS

Now in local bookstores is a fascinating new memoir of prison life in Andersonville. Ezra Hoyt Ripple was only in the 52nd Pennsylvania Volunteer Infantry for 2 and 1/2 months when he was captured in the early summer of 1864. Now his memoirs of 9 months in Confederate prisons has been published as dancing along the deadline: The Andersonville Memoir of a Prisoner of the Confederacy: Edited by Mark A. Snell. San Martin: Presido Press, 1996. $19.95 This moving narrative is made more valuable because of 55 special illustrations commission by Ripple to illustrating his narrative.
Special June Meeting

Please remember to mark your calendars for the special meeting on Tuesday June 18th, when Mark L. Bradley, author of *Last Stand in the Carolinas: The Battle of Bentonville* will speak. At that meeting also we will be holding a special silent auction. Already we have a number of good items contributed, including a Confederate Bond and a 1st Edition of Grant's Memoirs. If you have anything to donate please give Tom McCarthy a call.

Preservation News

A $130,000 fund raising drive is underway to purchase 456 acres of land within the site of Pilot Knob Battlefield in Missouri. It was here on Sept. 27, 1864 that Confederate forces under Sterling Price were repulsed in an attack against Union troops in Fort Davidson, causing Price to give up an attempt to seize St. Louis. If you would like to contribute to this worthy cause please send your check to The Conservation Fund, designated for Pilot Knob, C/O Diane Dinkins, Ozarks Federal Savings and Loan Association, P.O. Box 13, Ironton, MO 63650-0013 or to The Conservation Fund, 1800 North Kent St., Suite 1120, Arlington, VA 22209.

Elections of New Officers

At our May meeting elections for new officers will be held. The candidates are:
- President - Clyde Cherberg
- Vice President - Dr. William Trier
- Vice President Programming - Pat Brady
- Vice President Bulletin - Jeff Rombauer
- Treasurer - George Hood
- Assistant Treasurer - Tom McCarthy
- Secretary - Marc Duvall
- Circulation Chairman - Carole Murray
- Directors
  - W. H. Bennett, Jr.
  - Sue Crichton
  - Jim Dimond
  - Donald Larson
  - Rachel Roberts
  - Lin Russell
  - Rick Solomon

This Month in the Civil War

On May 9th, 1861, Confederate President Jefferson Davis signed a bill into law allowing volunteers to be accepted into the service of the Confederate States of America. On May 9th, 1862, Norfolk, Va., was evacuated by Confederate forces. In 1863, on May 9th, Stonewall Jackson was laying near death at a small house just south of Fredericksburg, Va. A year latter, the Union Maj. Gen. John Sedgwick was killed by a sniper near Spotsylvania. Finally on May 9th, 1865 the trial of the eight Lincoln assassination conspirators began in Washington D.C. before a military tribunal headed by Gen. Lew Wallace.

Reenactment Weekend

The Washington Civil War Association, will be holding a reenactment gathering at Fort Steilacoom the weekend of May 25 to 27th. If you would like more information on this event call 1-800-260-59

Notices to be placed into the bulletin should be sent to Jeff Rombauer, 22306 255th Ave SE, Maple Valley, WA 98038
"Mothers of Invention"

Just this past month, the noted historian Drew Gilpin Faust has published an excellent new study on the impact of the Civil War on elite white slave holding women of the South. *Mothers of Invention: Women of the Slaveholding South in the Civil War* [Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press] traces the struggle of these women to adjust to unaccustomed responsibilities in providing for their families when their fathers, brothers, sons and husbands marched off to war. Faust shows how the destruction wrought by the Civil War changed the concept of womanhood for these women as they struggled with the "disintegration of slavery and the disappearance of prewar prosperity." Drawing upon "diaries, letters, essays, and memoirs" of more than 500 women, Faust traces how "the prerogatives of whiteness and the protection of ladyhood began to dissolve as the Confederacy weakened and crumbled." For these women it became a world turned upside down. If you would like to read more on this subject, then book notes recommends the following diaries as being among the best published.


Richard Harwell has called this "one of the great diaries from any time and any place." Mary Chesnut was the wife of one of the most prominent planters and politicians of South Carolina. As a result of her husband's service in the Confederate Congress and later as an aide to Jefferson Davis, Mary Chesnut was privy to the innermost workings of the new government and its social circles. Sometime in the 1880s Mary reworked her war time diaries with the idea of publication in mind but the first edition [titled *A Diary From Dixie*] was not published until 1905, nearly 20 years after her death. The edition edited by Woodward is the most complete. Some of the original Chesnut diaries have survived and have been issued as *The Private Mary Chesnut*.


First published in 1913 as *A Confederate Girl's Diary*, this is the moving account "of a family caught up in the turmoil of war." Sarah Morgan was 20 years old when she started her diary in 1862, living with her family in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. E. Merton Coulter has praised this diary as "written with keen intelligence" and as being "one of the best war diaries relating to the Confederacy." This edition is the most complete of the three issued to date.


Catherine Ann Edmondston was the wife of a prominent planter and slaver holder in Halifax County, North Carolina. Her massive diary
"depicts with clarity the shattering impact of the war on the slave holding class, on black servitude, and on southern women in particular, whose circumscribed lives were suddenly exposed to the ravages of war and poverty."


Emma Holmes, the daughter of a prominent Charleston doctor, worked as a teacher and governess during the war. An ardent supporter of the Confederacy, her journal is a colorful day to day account of life in the Confederacy.


Douglas Southall Freeman considered Cornelia McDonald's diary and reminiscences "one of the most thrilling of the war books."

Mrs. McDonald kept a diary for most of the war, and added to it with additional reminiscences in the 1870's. This "valuable commentary" covers Mrs McDonald's life in Winchester, Virginia during the years 1862 to 1863 and later refugee life in Lexington, Virginia.


Kate Stone lived with her widowed mother, five brothers and younger sister at Brokenburn, the family plantation in Northeast Louisiana when the war broke out. The family was forced to flee to Texas in 1862 and spent the last two years of the war living there as refugees. Kate's journal provides a vivid portrait of the declining fortunes of her family brought on by civil war.


Called "an uninhibited and unique perception of Southern plantation society in its terminal years," this journal by young Lucy Breckinridge offers a "candid view of Southern life on a Shenandoah Valley plantation from 1862 to the end of 1864. Tragically Lucy survived the end of the war by only a few months, dying of typhoid fever in June of 1865.


Dolly Lunt Burge was a middle aged widow living on a plantation in central Georgia. While this diary covers twenty years of her life from 1847 to 1867, its most revealing portion is Burge's record of the impact of Sherman's march through Georgia.