The Washington Volunteer
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Thanks!!
To all our members who attended Emery Thomas speech at our last meeting. Attendance was the highest of the year, with over 90 members in attendance to hear the witty talk by the eminent historian on Why the War Came.

Next Meeting
Thursday May 14, 1998 at the Yankee Diner. 6 PM Social Hour with dinner at 7 PM. Choice of Herb Chicken or Beef Burgundy. The main entree is served with Caesar Salad, Biscuits, fresh vegetables, potatoes or rice with the chicken along with coffee or tea. Price is $17.00 a person. Please write your menu choice, name and the name of any guests on the enclosed card and mail it ASAP. If you choose not to mail the card in be sure to call Dio Richardson if you plan to attend. The staff at the Yankee Diner can accommodate our needs if we can provide them with an accurate count of the number of dinners that they can expect to serve.

Program
Our program for May will be a talk by Wallace Ohrt, a retired Boeing engineer and consultant who spent years researching Nicholas Trist, the diplomat who negotiated the treaty which ended the Mexican American War. His research has resulted in the recent publication of a biography of Trist by Texas A&M Press Defiant Peacemaker: Nicholas Trist in the Mexican War. Mr. Ohrt will discuss the expansionist movement of the 1840's, the Mexican War and the coming of the Civil War. For those interested in his book, Mr. Ohrt will have copies available for purchase.

NEW BOOKS
Our country's fascination with Robert E. Lee continues. Three new books are out this month on the Confederate general. Bevin Alexander has written Robert E. Lee's Civil War Holbrook: 1998 $24.95 a study which "shatters the widely held myth of Lee's military genius." Another new critical work on Lee is How Robert E. Lee Lost the Civil War by Edward H. Bonekemper. Fredericksburg: 1998 $29.95 According to Bonekemper "Lee unnecessarily went for the win, squandered his irreplaceable troops and weakened his army so badly with his aggressive strategy and tactics that he made defeat inevitable." In defense of Lee is Joseph L. Harsh's Confederate Tide Rising: Robert E. Lee and the Making of Southern Strategy, 1861-1862. Kent: Kent State University Press, 1988. $35 Harsh writes that "Lee's policies allowed the Confederacy to survive longer than it otherwise could have and were the policies best designed to win Southern independence."

FROM THE EDITOR'S DRAWER
On the 11th of December, 1864, a squad of Tennessee cavalry (Union), under Lieutenant Smith, made a dash into Shelbyville, then occupied by the rebels. As they were charging through the streets a private soldier, whose family resided in the place, suddenly exclaimed to the Lieutenant, "Look at the dirty scoundrels shooting at us out of my own house!" At the same time he raised his carbine, and crash went the charge through the window. "Take care!" said the Lieutenant; "your wife might be in the house." "Oh dear! I did not think of that!" was all the soldier had time to say, as a shower of rebel bullets compelled him to fly down street without knowing the result of his shot.

Harper's New Monthly Magazine January 1866
New Officers
It's time once again to go through the annual ritual of electing new officers and directors for PSWCRT. The election will be held at our May meeting. Nominated for the 1998-99 year are:

President Sue Crichton
Vice President Jim Dimond
Vice President Programming Pat Brady
Vice President Bulletin Jeff Rombauer
Treasurer Harley Cran
Secretary Marc Duval
Circulation Jeffrey Wells
Board of Directors
  Ed Donnelly
  Jeff Dygert
  John Hindes
  Don Murray
  Carole Murray
  Rachael Roberts
  Lin Russell
  Past President William Trier

Upcoming Programs
Members should be sure to make plans to attend our September meeting. Our speaker will be one of the most honored Civil War historians, James I. Robertson, the author/editor of over 20 works on the conflict. Some of his writings include Stonewall Jackson, General A. P. Hill, Soldiers Blue & Gray, and The Stonewall Brigade.

On the Net
For our final recommended site on the world wide web we recommend that you visit New York State and the Civil War at www.snymor.edu. As with a growing number of other state related sites, this web page offers a varied of informational sources relating to the Empire state during the conflict. On this site can be found genealogical research information, information to New York Civil War regiments, Medal of Honor winners from New York, to letters, diaries and Journals of New York Soldiers. A complete list of Civil War Round Tables in New York is also available at this site, as well as a listing of Civil War Monuments in New York state. So if you are interested in New York and its contribution during the Civil War this is one site which is well worth visiting.

Notices to be placed into the bulletin should be sent to Jeff Rombauer, 22306 255th Ave SE, Maple Valley, WA 98038 or by E-mail at jeffrombauer@foxinternet.net
Civil War Book Notes

"expansion & manifest destiny"

In the early 1840's the question of territorial expansion became a permanent issue on the American political scene. Fueling the debate over expansion was the question of annexing the independent Republic of Texas which had broken away from Mexico in 1836. The election of 1844 was deeply influenced by both the question of Texas and the settlement of the Oregon question with Great Britain.

Writing in 1845 to urge the annexation of Texas, New York newspaper editor John L. Sullivan coined the phrase "manifest destiny." It was the "will of heaven to over spread the continent allotted by providence" Or as Democratic leader James Buchanan stated, "the United States destiny was to inherit North America. 'For this reason it is, that the Almighty has implanted in the very nature of our people that spirit of progress, and that desire to roam abroad and seek new homes and new fields of enterprise, which characterizes them above all nations." This concept of manifest destiny was not viewed with favor by many Americans. In the north, those opposed to slavery viewed territorial expansion as a conspiracy for the "slavocracy" to maintain power. Southerners on the other hand saw territorial expansion and their equal rights in any new territories as a means to preserve their way of life from a hostile majority. As Michael Morrison has written in his fine study [listed below] "As soon as slavery was taken up by American politics in the territorial question the tragedy was foretold" The annexation of Texas led to the Mexican-American war; the possibility of new territories led David Wilmot to introduce the Wilmot Proviso in Congress in 1846; the issue of California led to the Compromise of 1850; the Kansas-Nebraska Act led to the creation of a sectional party which won the Presidency in 1860 and brought about the secession of the deep south slave states and ultimately civil war.

For those members wishing to read more about "manifest destiny" and its consequences the following books are recommended.

  A fine study by a noted historian of expansionism of all the maneuvers which led to the annexation of Texas.


  Three must read books for those interested in the Mexican - American War. Bauer's work is a good summary of the war itself. Johannsen's study is valuable for showing how the Mexican American war impacted American culture in mid 19th century America, and Eyewitness to War presents how the war was reflected in the popular prints of the period.


  The attempt by a Pennsylvania congressmen in 1846 to ban slavery from any new territory acquired from Mexico as the result of the Mexican - American War increased sectional tensions over the slavery issue.


  A modern study of one of the controversies that was "solved" by the Compromise of 1850, i.e. the boundaries of Texas.


  A quantitative study of the Kansas Nebraska bill and how party affiliation and sectionalism affect the vote in Congress on this measure.


  Two fine studies on the filibuster movements of the 1850's and the attempts to add Caribbean territory to the Slave holding South, either by conquest by soldiers of fortune or diplomacy.


  A comprehensive study of how slavery and territorial expansion intersected as causes of the Civil War.
One of the many aid associations in the North during the Civil War was the US Christian Commission. Organized in New York City in November 1861 by the YMCA, this group sought to aid both the physical and spiritual needs of Union soldiers. One plan of the Christian Commission was a "visitors" program where ministers could volunteer service for short periods of time (six weeks was the minimum) to perform duties at the front. One such minister was George Dana Boardman Pepper, from Massachusetts. The following letter is from a biographical sketch of Pepper published by his son-in-law Frederick Morgan Padelford (of University of Washington fame) in 1914.

"My Dear Wife:

I am glad to sit down for a minute before cutting little evening soldiers' prayer meeting and write you a word, tell you that I love you heartily, long and greet you when God will, bear you on my heart always. Hope you are well, happy, trustful, loving and serving God, -- making sunshine for others. This is in many respects a rough world and I have sometimes feared that my spirits would be soured and darkened, but I hope we shall be kept pure, and so glad.

And now, darling, I will give you the history of the day. After writing you yesterday, I filled my haversack with books, etc., and after tea started out in the rain, the mist, and the blueness to go nearly a mile to Co. F., 26 Michigan, for a meeting. It was a rough, bad weather to get there, but we had our meeting in the barracks, a long room with a board seat running the whole length of one side, and on the other the berths and a seat, rude enough you may guess. The Captain and Lieutenant came in and a very excellent meeting we had. Went from that place at 8 to the Soldiers' Rest, where hundreds of volunteers just from New York city were spending the night. It is a great place to operate at such time, -- all nationalities and all characters just from home, with one of the peculiar modifying, and I may say in a sense the elevating influences of associated soldier life. Father Taylor and Brother Briggs had been in during the day and collected two thousand dollars of them and sent it on by express to their friends. But there had been gambling and theft before them, and some poor fellows had suffered in consequence. I worked an hour in one of the rooms and by that time most of them were stretched on the hard floor for rest, tired by the day's duties.

This morning I went with Uncle John (Vassar) with a haversack full of testaments and some tracts and oh, how destitute they seem of the word of life! My stock was soon gone and home we went and this time filled two haversacks, which Uncle John left me to distribute alone, which I did, --German and English and had not enough even then.

Two little incidents occurred worth mentioning to you. A man, place by name, semi-intoxicated, in answer to my question how he found himself, said 'I am feeling pretty bad. I have got into this by getting drunk, was in the navy, have lost most of my money. My brother-in-law is a Methodist minister in Providence, R.I.; wish you would write him to get my prize money from Reuben Vose, 69 Wall Street, N.Y.' I tried to have him take a testament, but no, and I gave him some advice which was as wind against a rock.

The other incident funny enough, seriocomical, was a military arrest of your humble servant, and consignment to the guardhouse. As my work of distribution was about ended, a Lieutenant, with dangling sword, came up with official bustle and dignity, saying, 'By what authority, sir, are you in this room?' 'Oh, none in particular, sir, the guard allowed me to pass in.' 'Orderly take the man and report to so and so at the guardhouse.' So with true military dignity, kinglike, I marched with my servant to said place and officer, asking him meanwhile what all this meant. He said he didn't know, 'twas something incomprehensible to him. Come to the officer in the guardhouse, said he 'what does this mean?' 'I don't understand it. What did the Lieutenant mean? Go and tell him to come here at once and explain this matter.' Off went my escort, leaving me in very pleasant company, whom I blessed with edifying conversation and the gift of a few tracts. The officer grew uneasy. Said he, 'If that Lieutenant has any charge to prefer -- he had better hurry up.' Soon official dignity appears in the distance, coming with somewhat rapid step and dangling sword. He advances. His awful presence approaches. His sublime dignity draws near. He has reached the door and your awestruck, trembling, terrified, pallid, dumfounded husband is face to face with majestic officiality. Who can endure --awful suspense! But lo! miracle of miracles, instead of being blasted and blown up by the breath of terrific indignation and scathing malediction, a dignified and significant bow to the terrific to you astonished humble, and the words -- are my ears true in hearing? -- 'I beg your pardon, sir, I am sure I do. I am very sorry this thing has happened, indeed I am. Was told that some one was in the room peddling -- they come in and sell citizen's clothes --, and I took you to be the one and so made no inquiry'. Of course we intend to furnish you with all possible facilities in your work. I am very sorry indeed for this.' "Oh sir, it's all right. It will pass for a good joke. I didn't understand it, sir, but of course had no feeling about it. Good day, sir." There, wasn't that a joke, a military experience. Oh but dear, I am working somewhat for the men, and the Lord. I think does help and bless me. Brother Moss leaves on Wednesday and then I have the charge of the great work. I hope to have divine Strength.

Good night, dear,

Your own George.