

*Celebrating our 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary 1985-2010*

**THE WASHINGTON VOLUNTEER  
PUGET SOUND CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE  
OCTOBER 2010**

**NEXT MEETING: Thursday, October 14, 2010**

China Harbor, 2040 Westlake Avenue North, Seattle, Washington

**MENU CHOICES: Mongolian Beef, Chicken or Salmon**

Dinner includes: salad, vegetable delight, General Tao's chicken, fried rice and fresh fruit. Cost is \$21, payable at the door. Social hour at 6 p.m.; dinner served at 7 p.m.; program at 8 p.m. Call **Rod Cameron** at 206-524-4434 or email him at [rodcam@comcast.net](mailto:rodcam@comcast.net) to make reservations. **Deadline for reservations is 12 NOON on Tuesday, October 12.** ☒

**CLARKE HARRISON TO COMPARE THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR TO THE ENGLISH CIVIL WAR AND MORE...**

Clarke Harrison will compare the American Civil War to the English Civil War and the American Revolution, the Cousins' Wars, a 225-year war, three wars but one revolution. All three started with disputes that should have been subject to compromise, but spiraled out of control, and each represented a step in the development of democracy and equality. A Past President of our Round Table, Clarke read a lot of history while on the road in motels as a traveling salesman.

**NOTE: Remember to turn off cell phones before the meeting so there are no distractions for the speaker. Thank you!**

**IMPORTANT DISPATCHES**

The following is information concerning you and the PSCWRT. Please read and take notice.

**DUES & DONATIONS**

Membership dues are now payable either at the meeting or by mail: \$20 per individual, \$25 for a couple. Also, donations are gratefully accepted. These will help secure speakers for our meetings. Please note that all donations are tax deductible as the PSCWRT is a 501(c)3 organization. Tax information will be provided at your request.

**NEEDED: VOLUNTEER FOR TREASURER**

This is a reminder that we need your help. Stephen Pierce has been Treasurer of the Round Table for some years now. He has done an outstanding job, but like a good soldier who has been on the "front line" for far too long, he needs a rest. If any member would be interested in stepping up and taking over as Treasurer, please contact any board member or officer. Please know that Stephen will gladly help you in the transition. Thanks so much.

**ARE YOU TAKING A CIVIL WAR TRIP BACK EAST?**

If you are planning a trip to a Civil War site this or next year, please contact **Stephen Pierce** so he can compile a list. Whether your trip is organized or personal makes no difference. We seem

to always have people going back there and we're not using our club as a resource. We have all these deals, and inside knowledge that we're not sharing. Maybe we can put together a group? Stephen's contact information is at the end of the newsletter.

### **NEW MEMBERS!**

**Cynthia Wilson**, 2611 E Yesler Way, Seattle WA 98122, home 206-325-1585 and office 206-662-7341, [seek2b@yahoo.com](mailto:seek2b@yahoo.com)

**Michael Apelt**, 9430 1/2 -232nd St SW, Edmonds WA 98020, 503-686-4700 (for both home and office) [mja2355@msn.com](mailto:mja2355@msn.com)

*Please note: If you are a new member and you are not listed here, let me know. Thanks.*

## **Did the Civil War contribute to immigrant assimilation?**

**President's Corner, October 2010**

**By Dick Miller**

I've been reading David Laskin's [The Long Way Home: An American Journey from Ellis Island to the Great War](#). Laskin tells the history of the 500,000 immigrants who fought with the American Expeditionary Force in World War One. These men made up 18% of the 2.7 million soldiers America shipped to France to fight in the trenches. Initially, the government had great misgivings about drafting immigrants, many of whom could not speak English and who were not acculturated to the American way of life. Who could be sure if the Irish-American would fight alongside the English Tommy? Who knew if the thousands of men from Central Europe would turn against their comrades in battle in loyalty to the Kaiser or the Emperor? Who could tell if these men could be trusted to be American soldiers?

The situation was much the same fifty-five years earlier. Rather than forty-six nations contributing their immigrant sons to the AEF, it was Germans and Irish, with a sprinkling of Scandinavians, who fought for the North during the Civil War. Approximately 400,000 immigrant men—or 18% of the 2.2 million soldiers in the Union army—served their new country. Americans showed the same prejudices against these immigrant soldiers that they would exhibit during World War One. They did not like the popish, heavy drinking Irish and they thought the Germans cowardly and thieving. The Irish role in the New York draft riots and the rout of the “German” XI Corps at Chancellorsville did not help these stereotypes.

But just like World War One, the Civil War immigrant soldier demonstrated the same bravery and shared the same death as their American comrades. The Irish Brigade at Marye's Heights, the 15<sup>th</sup> Wisconsin Volunteers (the “Scandinavian Regiment”) at Chickamauga, and the 8<sup>th</sup> New York (“1<sup>st</sup> German Rifles”) at First Manassas gave all that was asked of them.

Christian Keller's [Chancellorsville and the Germans: Nativism, Ethnicity, and Civil War Memory](#) discusses the impact on the German-American community of American newspapers blaming German troops for the debacle at Chancellorsville. Keller argues that the stereotyping and finger pointing severely damaged German-American support for the war and delaying German assimilation into American culture until—ironically—World War I. But I've been wondering about a different thesis. Is it possible that American born troops, fighting next to immigrant regiments throughout the Civil War, came to see the German and the Irish and the

Swede as Americans, which made it easier to accept the great wave of immigrants in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century? I have heard that African American troops in World War Two and the Korean War paved the way for civil rights in the 1960s. Perhaps the immigrant soldier in the Civil War helped open the doors for European immigrants thirty years later.

## **THE “WASHINGTON VOLUNTEER” AND THE CIVIL WAR SESQUICENTENNIAL**

By Mark Terry, newsletter editor

As we approach the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary (Sesquicentennial) of the Civil War, my intention is to prepare each newsletter focusing on what took place 150 years that month. How this will look will vary from month to month, but there may be an article or timeline involved. Something else I want to introduce is a monthly Civil War Quiz. Some of you who are members of the CWPT received a little book from them titled “Do You Know the Civil War?” by Guy Robinson. In it are 100 questions related to the war. I thought it might be fun for us to try and answer the monthly questions related to the approximate time 150 years ago. I know that many of you are VERY knowledgeable about the war, and will enjoy the challenge! Please feel free to let me know what you think about these changes or anything other suggestions you have for our newsletter. See you at the October meeting!

### **Civil War Quiz- Ante-Bellum Period**

*For answers see the last page of the newsletter.*

1. The full title of Harriet Beecher Stowe’s 1852 anti-slavery book, the best selling novel of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, was *Uncle Tom’s Cabin, or...*
  - a. *A Tale of Slaves,*
  - b. *Life Among the Lowly,*
  - c. *On and Off the Mighty Mississippi,*
  - d. *How it really was*
2. In 1856, on the floor of the U.S. Senate, during arguments about slavery, a South Carolina congressman clubbed a Massachusetts senator on the head with a cane. Name either or both politicians.
3. When the anti-slavery guerrilla leader John Brown raided the federal arsenal at Harper’s Ferry in October, 1859, looking for weapons to use in a slave uprising, about how many men joined him in the assault?
  - a. More than 100
  - b. 30 to 40
  - c. 15 to 20
  - d. He was alone

### **OCTOBER 1860- 150 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH**

What does Grace Bedell have to do with the Civil War? Perhaps a better question to ask is how did this 11 year old change the image of one man and the look of politicians for the next 50 years?

On October 15, 1860 a young girl in upstate New York took pen in hand to write a letter to presidential candidate Abraham Lincoln in Springfield, Illinois about a matter she thought would help Mr. Lincoln’s image:

*Hon A B Lincoln...*

*Dear Sir*

*My father has just home from the fair and brought home your picture and Mr. Hamlin's. I am a little girl only 11 years old, but want you should be President of the United States very much so I hope you wont think me very bold to write to such a great man as you are. Have you any little girls about as large as I am if so give them my love and tell her to write to me if you cannot answer this letter. I have got 4 brothers and part of them will vote for you any way and if you let your whiskers grow I will try and get the rest of them to vote for you you would look a great deal better for your face is so thin. All the ladies like whiskers and they would tease their husbands to vote for you and then you would be President. My father is going to vote for you and if I was a man I would vote for you to but I will try to get every one to vote for you that I can I think that rail fence around your picture makes it look very pretty I have got a little baby sister she is nine weeks old and is just as cunning as can be. When you direct your letter direct to Grace Bedell Westfield Chautauqua County New York.*

*I must not write any more answer this letter right off Good bye  
Grace Bedell*

In the midst of a busy political campaign that was approaching its climax, something about Grace's letter moved Lincoln to take time to respond- and very quickly- as Grace had requested:

*Springfield, Ill Oct 19, 1860*

*Miss Grace Bedell*

*My dear little Miss*

*Your very agreeable letter of the 15th is received - I regret the necessity of saying I have no daughters - I have three sons - one seventeen, one nine, and one seven years of age - They, with their mother, constitute my whole family - As to the whiskers, having never worn any, do you not think people would call it a piece of silly affectation if I were to begin it now?*

*Your very sincere well wisher*

*A. Lincoln*

Abraham Lincoln's response, though kind and thoughtful doesn't give a hint that due to Grace's suggestion he would grow a beard. However, by the time Lincoln was elected and on his way to Washington, D.C. he had started to grow his famous "whiskers". His train happened to stop in Westfield, New York on February 16, 1861 and during a few remarks, he asked if Grace was in the audience. She was and they briefly met with Lincoln bending down and kissing her on the cheek, according to some accounts. Interestingly, the story didn't end there. In 2007, a second letter from Grace (not reproduced here) to the president was discovered. In that letter, written in 1864 Grace was 15 and looking for a government job to supplement her father's income. There is no indication that a job was ever given. Within the letter is some evidence pointing to a third letter, but that one has not yet been found.

As for the "rest of the story" as Paul Harvey used to say, at age 19 Grace Bedell was married in 1867 to George Billings (age 22), a Union veteran of the war. Billings had been in the 8<sup>th</sup> N.Y. Heavy Artillery, later serving in the 10<sup>th</sup> N.Y. Infantry, mustering out with the rank of sergeant.

They moved to Delphos, Kansas and had one child. Grace died on November 2, 1936, just two days before her 89<sup>th</sup> birthday, likely the most famous resident of Delphos, Kansas.

For further information on Grace Bedell, along with facsimiles of the letters above, and a very interesting video, see:

<http://www.gracebedellfoundation.org/>

The Grace Bedell Foundation is also currently raising funds to save and restore the home she and George Billings lived in at Delphos. Biographical information on Billings was found at:

<http://genealogytrails.com/kan/ottawa/bios/bbio.html>

Military records for Billings at: [civilwardata.com](http://civilwardata.com)

### **THE FOLLOWING ARTICLE WAS SUBMITTED BY MEMBER RICK SOLOMON.**

Rick recently participated in a seminar about General Robert E. Lee. Among the speakers was Ed Bearss.

For the fourth year in a row I went back East to attend a battlefield tour where the tour guide was the great Ed Bearss. This one was about Robert E. Lee and was hosted by Ted Alexander of Chambersburg Civil War Seminars and Tours. There were two half days of lectures sandwiched around a full day of a bus tour with Ed Bearss. The other four speakers were all very good. Dr. Richard Sommers of the Army War College and author of "Richmond Redeemed" spoke about Gettysburg, the Overland Campaign and the Siege of Petersburg. Peter Carmichael, a professor at Gettysburg College, talked about Lee's search for a battle of annihilation (almost impossible for anyone to achieve) and Lee's assessment among historians of the past forty years. Matt Penrod, a park ranger at Arlington House, spoke about Lee's private life, his attitude towards secession and slavery, and his politics. For the first time I found out that Lee's father, "Lighthorse" Harry Lee and Thomas Jefferson hated one another. This was because Harry Lee was a Federalist and Jefferson was not. Tom Clemons spoke about the Maryland Campaign of 1862. And Ed Bearss spoke about the emergence of Lee in 1861-1862.

In our bus tour we drove down to Hagerstown to follow the route of Lee and his lieutenants on the march to Gettysburg. We stopped in Greencastle and were shown a building where both George Washington and Lee stayed that is now a Chinese restaurant. One of our group remarked, "I didn't know Washington liked to eat Chinese." Finally Ed took us to several points on the battlefield at Gettysburg. We actually marched part of Pickett's Charge starting at the Spangler Farm up to the Emmittsburg Road. This is where Pickett's Division, the right flank of the advancing Rebels marched, and Ed demonstrated, due to the undulation of the land, that these Confederates could not see Cemetery Ridge until they reached the Emmittsburg Road, and, therefore, were not under fire until then. Then Pickett's Division had to do an extreme oblique to the left for the rest of the charge.

By chance I sat opposite Ed Bearss for both dinner and lunch. Ed opined that Dick Ewell was a better corps commander than A.P. Hill. Ed also stated that Lee had been thinking about going from two corps to three corps for some time before the death of Stonewall Jackson. He agreed with me had Jackson not been shot at Chancellorsville that A. P. Hill, rather than Dick Ewell, would have been named the Third Corps commander in addition to Longstreet and Jackson. Ed

pointed out that even though Lee had ordered Dick Anderson's five brigades to advance in support of Pickett's Charge, only two of those brigades moved forward. Was the failure to charge the fault of A. P. Hill (corps commander), Dick Anderson (division commander) or the individual three brigade commanders? Ed didn't answer this, except to say that even if they had also charged the attack still would have failed. When one of our group asked Ed where he goes on vacation Ed answered, "I don't go on vacation. I have accumulated 28 months of unused paid vacation time with the Park Service." At 87 years old Ed Bearss remains physically and mentally intact. He is still being booked for lectures or tours 250 days per year. Ed Bearss remains a National Treasure.

**We welcome your article or research submissions for the newsletter, but they may be edited. The deadline for the November, 2010 Washington Volunteer is Wednesday, October 27, 2010. Please have it in Mark Terry's hands via email or snailmail by then. Thank you!**

### **2010-2011 OFFICERS**

#### **Elected\***

President, Richard Miller, 425-201-3234 or 206-808-8506, Milomiller882@msn.com

Vice-President/Successor, Steve Bass, sbass@monsonandbass.com

Immediate Past-President Mark Terry, 425-337-6246, Markimlor@comcast.net

Vice-President, Programming, Pat Brady, 206-246-1603, patsbrady@comcast.net

Vice-President, Newsletter, Mark Terry (info above)

Treasurer, Stephen Pierce, 425-640-8808, horseless1@juno.com

Secretary, Larry Jilbert,

*\*Except for Immediate Past President, which is an automatic position.*

#### **Appointed**

Publicity Chairman, Clarke Harrison, 425-822-2267, clarkevh@comcast.net

Assistant Treasurer, vacant

Dinner Reservations Coordinator, Rod Cameron, 206-524-4434, rodcam@comcast.net

Webmaster, Gary Larkin, 206-510-7033, gary.larkin@sound60.com

Official Greeter, Larry Cenotto

#### **Elected Board of Directors**

Jeff Rombauer, Jim Dimond, Larry Jilbert

Puget Sound Civil War Round Table meets on the second Thursday of each month, September through May. The PSCWRT is a 501c3 organization, and as such, donations you make to the organization are tax deductible.

#### **Membership Dues**

Dues are \$20 for an individual and \$25 for a couple. You can mail your dues to the PSCWRT, c/o Stephen Pierce, 8008 190th Street SW, Edmonds, WA 98026. **Questions?** Email is horseless1@juno.com, or call him at 425-640-8808.

<b>Answers to Civil War Quiz:</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. b.</li><li>2. Preston Brooks was the clubber, Charles Sumner the clubee</li><li>3. c.</li></ol>