

*Celebrating our 25th
Anniversary 1985-2010*

**THE WASHINGTON VOLUNTEER
PUGET SOUND CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE
[HTTP://WWW.PSCWRT.ORG/](http://www.pscwrt.org/)
DECEMBER, 2010**

NEXT MEETING: Thursday, December 9, 2010

China Harbor, 2040 Westlake Avenue North, Seattle, Washington

Time: Social hour at **6 p.m.**; Dinner served at **7 p.m.**; Program at **8 p.m.**

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, **but reservations and meal choices are required.**

To make reservations and meal choices, Contact Rod Cameron at 206-524-4434 or email him at rodcam@comcast.net. **Deadline for reservations is 12 NOON on Tuesday, December 7.**

DICK MILLER WILL TALK ON THE 1862 NEW MEXICO CAMPAIGN.

Notions of Confederate Manifest Destiny led to the campaign by Henry Hopkins Sibley and his 3,000-strong Army of New Mexico, where they won tactical victories at Valverde and Glorieta, but the Federals eventually achieved strategic victory. The campaign featured colorful characters like William Dirty Shirt Scurry and his east Texas troops, and John Chivington and his Colorado Pikes Peakers. Dick is President of our Round Table.

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

According to Treasurer Stephen Pierce, most of you who attend meetings have paid dues.

THANK YOU for renewing! If you haven't -and you know who you are- please do so as soon as possible. Dues are \$20 per individual, \$25 for a couple. The Round Table depends on dues and donations to secure speakers to come to our meetings. Donations are gratefully accepted as well.

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.**

NEW MEMBER!

Please note: If you are a new member and you have not been listed here, let me know. Thanks.
Daniel Liestman, 33318 Lane South, apt F-201, Federal Way WA 98003, tarboxboy@aol.com

CIVIL WAR WEBSITES OF NOTE

Mike Movius contacted me recently with a link to recordings of Civil War historians on the internet. The site is called Civil War Talk Radio. The URL is <http://www.impedimentsofwar.org/>. There are currently seven seasons of shows going back to September 2004. Go check it out. Besides, our Round Table is linked on their site!

If you were at the November meeting, you will recall that President Dick Miller gave us some information about a site on the 'Net that lists events that took place 150 years ago during the Civil War. Here is the link: <http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2010/10/29/opinion/20101029-civil-war.html> Have fun finding information on this page plus links to other sites.

The Horse's Role in the South's Defeat

President's Corner, December 2010

By Dick Miller

Last month I wrote about death's constant presence during the Civil War and the fine study by Drew Gilpin Faust, [This Republic of Suffering: Death and the American Civil War](#). Naturally, we count the 620,000 Union and Confederates soldiers who died when we think of the war's cost in lives. But the loss of human life pales in comparison to the loss of horses and mules. Keith Miller, in a February 2006 [Civil War Times](#) article, noted that "Whereas 2 percent of all the people in the United States died in the Civil War, about 20 percent of the country's 7.4 million horse and mules were destroyed." While horses died in battle (mules bolted under gunfire and tended not to be used in battle), many more horses and mules died from disease and exhaustion.

Miller writes that the war claimed one-half of the South's horses and mules. It could be argued that the South's inability to supply its armies with adequate horses and mules played a significant part in its defeat. The loss of 500 horses and mules at the Battle of Valverde and another 800 horses and mules at Glorieta did more to end the 1862 Confederate invasion of New Mexico than the efforts of Federal troops on the field of battle. Miller argues that the limited mobility of Longstreet's men in east Tennessee, occasioned by the lack of horses and mules when Longstreet's corps went west, contributed to Longstreet's failure during the Knoxville campaign. Perhaps more critical to the war's outcome, Miller claims that Lee resisted sending reinforcements to Joe Johnston outside of Vicksburg partly because he knew that the Southern rail system could not transport the necessary horses and mules to support the troops.

Although historians recognize the critical role railroads and steamboats played in transporting men and material during the Civil War, ultimately the armies had to rely on horses and mules to pull supply wagons during campaigns. Lacking an adequate supply of healthy animals, the

Confederates at times had to abandon wagons loaded with ammunition, clothing, food, forage and other essential items for an army. Interestingly, the disappearance of horses and mules throughout the South as the war progressed also contributed to the deterioration of Southern railroads as timber could not be harvested for the manufacture of railroad ties and bridges or even locomotive fuel.

By 1865, Confederate armies could no longer replace their worn-out animals. Sherman carried away more than 10,000 horses and mules during his march from Atlanta to Savannah, Sheridan captured at least 2,000 animals during the Shenandoah Valley campaign, and James Wilson's cavalry was believed to have appropriated 20,000 horses and mules during his 1865 raid through Tennessee and Georgia. One reason why Grant's men could stay ahead of the Army of Northern Virginia during the retreat to Appomattox was their supply of healthy, fresh horses. Lieutenant William Owen of the Washington Artillery wrote of the Rebel line of the retreat, "We are passing abandoned cannon and wrecked and overturned wagons and their now useless contents...Horses and mules dead or dying in the mud...Our march is lighted by the first of burning wagons." By the time Grant allowed the Rebel officers and cavalymen to take their horses and mules home, the Confederate army yielded only 1,700 animals and 200 wagons to the Union quartermasters. Like so many other necessary items to the Confederate war effort, the South had depleted its supply of horses and mules and its effort stopped in its tracks.

150 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH: DECEMBER 1860

With the election of Republican Abraham Lincoln as President of the United States in November, Americans across the country wondered what would happen next. Would the states in the Deep South do as some "Fire Eaters" had threatened and secede from the Union? More and more, the focus of the nation became South Carolina and specifically Charleston.

December 1, Saturday

The Florida legislature met in special session to consider the issues of the hour.

December 4, Tuesday

President James Buchanan gives his "State of the Union" address. He said that the states of the north should not interfere in the affairs of the slave-holding states of the south. But at the same time, he also condemned the threat to secede by Southern states saying "the election of any one of our fellow-citizens to the office of President does not of itself afford just cause for dissolving the Union". He proposed an amendment to protect slavery where it existed, and allowing it in territories where it was wanted. The speech mollified neither side, but a "Committee of Thirty Three"-one from each state- was put together in the House of Representatives to work on solutions.

December 8, Saturday

Secretary of the Treasury Howell Cobb of Georgia resigned from the Cabinet- the first to do so.

December 10, Monday

A delegation from South Carolina met with Buchanan saying that the U.S. forts in Charleston Harbor would not be molested prior to an act of secession, provided no attempt would be made to reinforce the garrison. They left feeling that an agreement was reached that no change would be made by the U.S troops stationed in the harbor.

December 12, Wednesday

Secretary of State Lewis Cass of Michigan resigned from the Cabinet because Buchanan refused to reinforce the Charleston forts.

December 14, Friday

The Georgia legislature called on South Carolina, Alabama, Florida and Mississippi to appoint delegates to a convention to consider a Southern Confederacy.

December 17, Monday

In Columbia, South Carolina a convention of legislators gathered to consider secession of the state. The resolution to secede was voted on and passed, 159-0. However, to make it official it still had to be voted on. Due to a smallpox epidemic in the city, the convention was moved to Charleston.

December 20, Thursday

The Secession Convention meeting in Charleston, S.C. voted 169-0 to officially secede from the Union and become an independent state.

December 24, Monday

Alabama elects delegates to a convention to take place January 14, 1861 regarding secession. The four South Carolina representatives in the House resign, but their names are retained on the rolls, thus not recognizing South Carolina's secession.

December 26, Wednesday

By 8 p.m., the small Federal garrison at Fort Moultrie had been secretly and successfully been transferred to Fort Sumter at the mouth of Charleston Harbor. In the wake of secession, Maj. Anderson had been anticipating an assault which he felt would lead to bloodshed. The move infuriated South Carolinians who felt they had been promised no such move would be made.

December 28, Friday

Commissioners from South Carolina met with President Buchanan, insisting on withdrawal of Federal troops from Charleston, while Gen. Winfield Scott favored reinforcing those same troops. Cabinet members were also divided, some almost coming to blows. All over the country, public meetings and the press clamored on all sides of the issues facing the nation.

December 30, Sunday

South Carolina militia seized all Federal properties in and around Charleston except Fort Sumter.

December 31, Monday

Buchanan passed the buck to Congress to define relations between the Federal government and South Carolina. In the Senate, a committee to find compromise reported they had not been able to reach any agreement. Other attempts had been defeated in committee. The year 1860 ended with the nation in crisis...

These events are taken from the book *The Civil War Day by Day* by E.B. Long.

Editor's Note: One of the intentions of the month by month retelling of these events is so that hopefully we can *feel* what the country was going through in "real time". For more information on Fort Sumter and the Secession Crisis, you may want to read *Allegiance: Fort Sumter, Charleston, and the Beginning of the Civil War* by David Detzer. It is a good read.

The following article is from the Internet. Due to its size, only a long excerpt is reprinted here. The author is not listed, so I cannot give credit to whom it is due. I hope you enjoy it during this time of the year...Here is the link: http://dburgin.tripod.com/cw_xmas/cwarchristmas.htm

“A Civil War Christmas”

Many of today's American Christmas customs are rooted in the early 19th century. Perhaps ironically, they came to maturity during the Civil War, when violence, chaos, and staggering personal losses seemed likely to drown out the choruses of "Peace on Earth."

Many of the artists of the period, Winslow Homer, Thomas Nast, and Alfred Waud created visual chronicles of the spreading influence of many holiday traditions we enjoy today, including Santa Claus, Christmas trees, gift-giving, caroling, holiday feasting, and Christmas cards.

Nast and Homer drew scenes of the wartime practice of sending Christmas boxes filled with homemade clothes and food items to soldiers at the front. The war made an impact on the nation, both North and South, in the ways Christmas was observed.

Christmas boxes like the ones Homer and Nast pictured gave their recipients a much-needed mental and physical boost. When in 1861, for the first *Harper's Weekly* Christmas cover of the war, Homer drew overjoyed soldiers reveling in the contents of Adams Express boxes from home.

The most beloved symbol of the American family Christmas--the decorated Christmas tree--came into its own during the Civil War. Christmas trees had become popular in the decade before the war, and in the early 1860s, many families were beginning to decorate them. Illustrators working for the national weeklies helped popularize the practice by putting decorated table-top Christmas trees in their drawings.

On the home front, the homes were mostly decorated with different kinds of pines, holly, ivy and mistletoe. While there were many families who spent lonely Christmases during the war, they still had a Christmas Tree which was the centerpiece for the home. Most trees were small and sat on a table.

The decorations were mostly home made, such as strings of dried fruit, popcorn, pine cones. Colored paper, silver foil, as well as spun glass were popular choices for making decorations. Santa brought gifts to the children. Those gifts were home made, such as carved toys, cakes or fruits.

It was only a matter of time before the Christmas tree made its way into military camps. Alfred Bellard of the 5th New Jersey remarked about the arrival of the newly popular Christmas icon to his camp along the lower Potomac River.

"In order to make it look much like Christmas as possible, a small tree was stuck up in front of our tent, decked off with hard tack and pork, in lieu of cakes and oranges, etc".

Christmas carols were sung both at home and in the camps. Can you imagine how homesick the soldiers would become singing these songs. Some of the most popular ones were "Silent Night," "Away in the Manger," "Oh Come All Ye Faithful," and "Deck the Halls".

By 1863, the Union blockade of the Southern coasts had made it nearly impossible for Santa Claus to visit homes in the South; scarcity of goods and the consequent high prices put both store-bought presents and raw materials for homemade gifts out of the financial reach of many Southern consumers. Quite a few mothers explained to their children that even Santa Claus would not be able run the formidable blockade.

Ella Gertrude Clanton Thomas of Augusta, Georgia, told how a simple act of faith on the part of her children caused her to dig deeper for a holiday offering on Christmas Eve:

"I have written so much that it is now after 9 o'clock and yet I have said nothing of Turner's and Mary Bell's party which we gave them last week in lieu of the Santa Claus presents. Mary Bell has been told that Santa Claus has not been able to run the blockade and has gone to war--Yet at this late hour when I went upstairs Thursday night of the party I found that the trusting faith of childhood they had hung their little socks and stockings in case Santa Claus did come. I had given the subject no thought whatever, but invoking Santa Claus aid I was enabled when their little eyes opened to enjoy their pleasure to find cake and money in their socks."

Santa Claus apparently had a much easier time visiting homes in the North than those in the South that Christmas. According to a letter Sarah Thetford sent to her brother George, *"Santa arrived in here in Michigan dressed in a buffalo coat with presents fastened to his coat-tail...and a corn-popper on his back."* She continued that she had *"often heard Santa Claus described, but never before saw the old fellow in person."*

Sometimes Santa Claus worked behind the scenes of wartime savagery to bring a bit of Christmas cheer to those who otherwise had little reason to celebrate. Following General William T. Sherman's capture of Savannah, Georgia, and presentation of it as a Christmas gift to Lincoln in 1864, about 90 Michigan men and their captain in turn gave a token of charity to Southern civilians living outside the city. Christmas Day, the soldiers loaded several wagons full of food and other supplies and distributed the items about the ravaged Georgia countryside. The destitute Southerners thanked the jolly Union Santa Clauses as the wagons pulled away under the power of mules that had tree-branch "antlers" strapped to their heads to turn them into makeshift reindeer.

As the war dragged on, deprivation replaced bounteous repasts and familiar faces were missing from the family dinner table. Soldiers used to "bringing in the tree" and caroling in church were instead scavenging for firewood and singing drinking songs around the campfire. And so the holiday celebration most associated with family and home was a contradiction. It was a joyful, sad, religious, boisterous, and subdued event.

Corporal J. C. Williams, Co. B, 14th Vermont Infantry, December 25, 1862:

"This is Christmas, and my mind wanders back to that home made lonesome by my absence, while far away from the peace and quietude of civil life to undergo the hardships of the camp, and may be the battle field. I think of the many lives that are endangered, and hope that the time will soon come when peace, with its innumerable blessings, shall once more restore our country to happiness and prosperity."

* * * * *

Gilbert J. Barton, Company I of Charlotte, recorded some of the hardships of camp that day:

"Dec 25th Christmas. Had hard Tack soaked in cold water and then fried in pork Greece [sic]. Fried in a canteen, split into[sic] by putting into the fire & melting the sodder[sic] off. We pick them up on the field left by other soldiers, also had coffee & pork. Ordered up at 5 this morning with guns ready, as it is reported that there are 400 Rebel Cavalry not far off prowling around. Foggy morning."

* * * * *

Robert Gould Shaw, then a 2nd lieutenant in the 2d Massachusetts Infantry, writes in 1861, about guard duty near Frederick, MD. He would later earn fame as the commander of the heroic African American unit, the 54th Massachusetts.

"It is Christmas morning and I hope a happy and merry one for you all, though it looks so stormy for our poor country, one can hardly be in merry humor."

* * * * *

On December 24, 1861, Captain Robert Goldthwaite Carter of the 22nd Mass. Vol. Inf. 4th U.S. Cavalry wrote:

"Christmas Eve, and I am on duty as officer of the day, but I am not on duty to-morrow. As much as I desire to see you all, I would not leave my company alone...I give my company a Christmas dinner to-morrow, consisting of turkey, oysters, pies, apples, etc.; no liquors."

* * * * *

John H. Brinton, a Major and Surgeon U.S.V. wrote:

"During the days preceding Christmas, I received some boxes from home, full of nice comfortable things, and the letter which came to me at that time, you may be sure, made me feel homesick. On Christmas night, I left for St. Louis as my teeth were troubling me, and greatly in need of the services of a dentist. I was fortunate in finding a good one, and in a day or two the necessary repairs were made."

* * * * *

From the diary of Private Robert A. Moore, a Confederate soldier:

Tuesday, Dec 24th, 1861, camp near Swan's...

"This is Christmas Eve but seems but little like it to me"

Wednesday, Dec. 25th, 1861, camp near Swan's...

"This is Christmas & and very dull Christmas it has been to me. Had an egg-nog to-night but did not enjoy it much as we had no ladies to share it with us."

* * * * *

THE FOLLOWING STORY IS FROM MEMBER ROBERT K. WILSON, ABOUT HIS GREAT-GRANDFATHER'S SERVICE IN THE CIVIL WAR. IF YOU HAVE WRITTEN SOMETHING LIKE THIS PLEASE SUBMIT IT TO OUR "VOLUNTEER". IT MAY GET PUBLISHED!

"He held me in his arms"

By Robert K. Wilson

My great grandfather was John J. Johnson. He was born on 1 Dec 1844, served in the Union Army from 29 August 1862 thru 7 June 1865, and died 15 April 1931 at the age of 87. I, Robert K. Wilson, was born the 21st of January 1931 and he held me in his arms.

Some of the following is from the "Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Indiana" printed in 1893, located in the Indiana Library in Indianapolis, Indiana.

John J's Parents had 6 children, four boys and two girls. Three of the sons served in the Union Army. Brother George died of Typhoid fever after 5 months service.

John J answered President Lincoln's second call for 300,000 men when he was only 17 years of age and enlisted in Company G, Eighty-eighth Regiment, Indiana Volunteer Infantry, as a private. His regiment was organized at Fort Wayne and mustered into service at Indianapolis.

They were sent to Louisville, Kentucky, and while there the troops were put on review. It was an excessive hot day. They were marching through the city on a street lined with two-story buildings. Many citizen-soldiers, unused to drill, succumbed to heatstroke and died in the narrow, suffocating streets. JJJ was one of those that were felled but he survived.

John soon found himself at Camp Yates, Kentucky. His first battle was at Perryville, Kentucky, October 8, 1862. That was followed by Stone River, Duck River, Tullahoma, and Elk River in Tenn. John missed the 88th's engagements at Dug Gap, Chickamauga and Lookout Mt, being in the hospital suffering from the results of the sunstroke and diarrhea.

He rejoined his company to fight at Missionary Ridge, and was engaged in the charge on the Ridge, being among the first to plant the Union flag on the rebel works. Then it was on to Ringgold, Grayville, White Oak Ridge, Tunnel Hill, Buzzard's Roost, Resaca, Dallas, Kennesaw Mountain, Peach Tree Creek, Eutaw Creek, Jonesboro, and Atlanta in the pursuit of Hood. He participated in Sherman's march to the sea, after which he took part in the engagements at Savannah, Averbosoro, and Bentonville in North Carolina, finally ending up in Raleigh. He was present at the Grand Review in Washington, D.C. May 24, 1865. In all the toilsome marches made by his regiment he rode only four miles.

He was mustered out at Washington, June 7 and was honorably discharged at Indianapolis June 18, 1865.

During his service he was slightly wounded on three different occasions. At one time a bullet passed directly through his rubber blanket, which was folded snugly, so that the ball made twenty-three holes in it and one through his blouse.

After the war he taught school and in his later years worked in the water survey at the University of Illinois.

I have several mementoes left by him, including a patch of the blanket with a hole made by the bullet, a ring carved by him, the brass stencil used to mark his service goods, a locked wooden box made by him and some medals.

TO PUT THINGS IN PERSPECTIVE:

“Back around 1850...a little Pennsylvania town was preparing to celebrate the Fourth of July, when someone brought in word that a veteran of the Revolution was still living, on a farm back in the mountains a little way from town. By 1850, of course, authentic veterans of the Revolution were getting very scarce, so nothing would do but that the old gentleman must be brought into town to be guest of honor at the Independence Day celebration. They sent a carriage up to the mountains and brought old Uncle John into town, and after a big parade with the local brass band leading the way they wound up at the speaker’s platform in the public square; and there, presently, Uncle John found himself pushed forward to the edge of the rostrum to make a speech. He began bravely enough: ‘I remember when we surrendered at Yorktown....’ Then, of course, someone on the speaker’s stand tugged at his coattails and reminded him, in a stage whisper: ‘Uncle John! You’ve got it wrong! It wasn’t you that surrendered at Yorktown!’ Uncle John cleared his throat, straightened his tie, and began again: ‘I remember the day when we laid down our arms at Yorktown...’ Someone in the audience called out: ‘Hey, old man! You didn’t lay down your arms!’ ‘Well, I guess I ought to know. I was one of Cornwallis’s Hessians!’ “
From Oliver Jensen’s *Bruce Catton’s America*, page 181.

Robert K Wilson’s note: I add this little gem to give a little perspective to history for the benefit of our children. This old gentleman was in the American Revolution and was alive when John J Johnson was born. And JJJ was alive when I was born. Now, I am alive when the latest of our family’s offspring, Darian Nicole Conn came into being. So you see that it really hasn’t been that long since our American Revolution – only three life-times!

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

On behalf of the officers and board members of the Puget Sound Civil War Round Table, I wish you all a very MERRY CHRISTMAS and a HAPPY NEW YEAR in 2011. May you and yours be blessed during this season and in the year to come.

God bless you,

Mark Terry

Editor, Washington Volunteer

P.S. I hope you have enjoyed this issue. It is the longest I have compiled so far, but there were many articles I felt needed inclusion. The Civil War Quiz should be back next month.

We welcome your article or research submissions for the newsletter, but they may be edited. The deadline for the January, 2011 Washington Volunteer is Wednesday, December 29, 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, Stephen Pierce, 425-640-8808, horseless1@juno.com

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

Website: <http://www.pscwrt.org/>

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.