



THE JOHNSTON JOURNAL

SONS OF CONFEDERATE VETERANS

Albert Sidney Johnston Camp 67 – Houston, Texas
Wednesday, 15 July 2009

Join us for a presentation by Richard B. McCaslin on

A Soldier's Letters to Charming Nellie
The Correspondence of Joseph B. Polley, Hood's Texas Brigade

The Briar Club (Westheimer at Timmons Lane)

5:30 pm Executive Board meeting

(all camp members in good standing are invited to attend)

6:30 pm Happy Hour — Cash Bar

7:00 pm Dinner and Camp Meeting

Commander Raymond Holder

First Lt. Commander Robert Shivers

Second Lt. Commander Everette Gardner

Third Lt. Commander Peter Gryska

Adjutant/Treasurer Bill Holmes

Please RSVP to

Raymond Holder 254-624-3990 or holderraymond@hotmail.com

or Bill Holmes or bholmes@patriotbankusa.com

"The principle for which we contend is bound to reassert itself, though it may be at another time and in another form."

Jefferson Davis

www.scvcamp67.org



Richard B. McCaslin is Chair of the Department of History at the University of North Texas. He received his Ph. D. from the University of Texas at Austin. He has published over 11 books on the War Between the States and related topics including **“Tainted Breeze: The Great Hanging at Gainesville, Texas.”**

One of the most cited collections of letters by a Civil War soldier, **A Soldier's Letters to Charming Nellie** was originally published in 1908. A unit history of the 4th Texas Infantry in epistolary form, Joseph B. Polley's letters make available the correspondence of a soldier who participated in virtually all military action in the Eastern Theater. Polley was an unusually gifted writer, with a talent for satire and humor unmatched by most Civil War diarists.

The Commander's Corridor

I am looking forward to seeing all of you at the July meeting as the fellowship is always enjoyable. Please RSVP so as we can give the Briar Club an accurate count. See you there.

Raymond Holder, Commander

Albert Sidney Johnston camp # 67 of Houston, Texas

*The stars of Night contain the glittering Day
And rain his glory down with sweeter grace
Upon the dark World's grand, enchanted face --
All loth to turn away.*

*And so the Day, about to yield his breath,
Utters the stars unto the listening Night,
To stand for burning fare-thee-wells of light
Said on the verge of death.*

*O hero-life that lit us like the sun!
O hero-words that glittered like the stars
And stood and shone above the gloomy wars
When the hero-life was done!*

The Dying Words of Stonewall Jackson
Sidney Lanier



This Day in Confederate History – July

"I loved the old government in 1861. I loved the old Constitution yet. I think it is the best government in the world, if administered as it was before the war. I do not hate it; I am opposing now only the radical revolutionists who are trying to destroy it."

--- Nathan Bedford Forrest

1 July 1863 Gettysburg – The 1st Day

Was it random chance, overconfidence, or just a good road network that brought the two great armies of the Eastern Theater together in Pennsylvania today? Whatever the reason, skirmishers from A. P. Hill's Confederate corps encountered what they first took to be Pennsylvania militia on Chambersburg Pike west of Gettysburg. The "militia" was in fact the crack cavalry of Gen. John Buford, fighting dismounted. As one group after another was unable to dislodge these "militia", eventually Buford's Co. E of the 9th New York Cavalry was standing off two brigades in one of the classic fighting withdrawals of this or any war. The delay was just long enough for Gen. John Reynolds's 1st Corps to get up to carry on the fight, although without Reynolds who was killed early on. O.O. Howard's 11th Corps was right behind. The early efforts to fight north of town were quickly swamped, and chaos followed fleeing Union men and pursuing Confederates alike as they headed for the high ground of Cemetery and Culp's Hills. That "lovely ground" was in Union hands at the end of this day.

2 July 1861 Lincoln Suspends Habeas Corpus

The right of habeas corpus is so basic to America that it is enshrined in the Constitution. Including such features as protection from arrest without specific charge, right to reasonable bail and the like, it went straight out the window today. President Lincoln, in what would become one of the most controversial actions of the war years, today authorized Winfield Scott, Commanding General of the US Army, to suspend this right as he saw fit anywhere between Washington and New York. Many saw the suspension of civil liberties as the first step down the road to tyranny and the failure of the American experiment in democracy.

3 July 1863 Gettysburg – The 3rd Day

The Army of Northern Virginia had attacked the Federal right on Cemetery and Culp's Hills yesterday and failed to dislodge them. They had attacked the left at Little Round Top, the Wheatfield and Devil's Den, and failed to roll up the line. Today it was decided to attack the center. Preceded by an immense artillery barrage (which mostly overshot the line it was intended to hit on Cemetery Ridge) the divisions of Pickett, Pettigrew and Trimble set forth on their march into history. Although a few men made it across the stone wall, they were soon killed or captured. The Union center held.

4 July 1862 The Seven Days – Aftermath

As the aftermath of the Seven Days' battle continued, the fighting on land might be over with but the conflict continued on the water. Two vessels in particular had been conducting a running fight for some time. The CSS Teaser was victorious today as a lucky shot caught her opponent, the USS Maratanza, in just the right spot and exploded her boiler. When the Federals searched the wreckage of the Teaser they found a number of interesting items: floating mines ready to be laid in the James River; "peculiar fuzes" which were sent to Washington for examination; and, most intriguing of all, an observation balloon and the equipment needed to launch it. The balloon itself became an object of legend. It was made of silk for the sake of lightness. The silk, it was said, was obtained by sewing together the donated dresses of the women of Richmond. mac had to be transferred from its home base would not succeed.

5 July 1864 – Jubal Early Threatens Washington

In '62 it had been Antietam. In '63 the attack was in Gettysburg. So when summertime came around it caused nervousness in the North. Jubal Early hoped that Lincoln would order the recall of the troops surrounding Petersburg if he could threaten Washington. Deciding against an assault on Harper's Ferry, he fought smaller battles in Point of Rocks, Keedysville, Nolan's Ferry and elsewhere. Rather than bother Gen. Grant, Lincoln called for militia reinforcements from New York and Pennsylvania to meet the threat.

6 July 1861 – Raphael Semmes' Debut

Commander Raphael Semmes was just beginning his career as the terror of Union commercial shipping. In less than a week with the CSS Sumter he had captured seven vessels. He tried to pull off a diplomatic coup today by depositing the prizes in Cienfuegos, Cuba, casually telling the Spanish colonial governor that he assumed Cuba would treat Confederate ships with "the same friendly reception..as to cruisers of the enemy." As this would have amounted to diplomatic recognition of the Rebel government, the Spanish declined. The prizes were later released.

7 July 1863 – Gettysburg Aftermath

There were skirmishes in such varied places as Harper's Ferry, Downsville, and the aptly named Funkstown, Md. These were all related, in one way or another, to Robert E. Lee's desperate attempt to get his battered but unbowed Army of Northern Virginia back to the territory of their name. Lincoln, although elated about the news of the fall of Vicksburg, did not quite seem to understand that although Lee was fleeing, Meade was not pursuing. He wrote to Halleck, "Now, if Gen. Meade can complete his work...the rebellion will be over."

8 July 1862 – Seven Days Aftermath

With very nearly the entire Army of the Potomac camped out for now on the banks of the James River, following the losses of the Seven Days campaign, some more organized system of logistics was desperately needed. Commander John Rogers was assigned to work on this, and came up with a plan to use gunboats to escort a convoy of ships between Harrison's Bar to the mouth of the Chicahominy. The plan was to leave at 9 each morning, since that was when mail was delivered to Old Point, near Harrison's Bar, or Landing.

9 July 1862 – John Hunt Morgan

John Hunt Morgan had had a varied career. The native Kentuckian had been expelled from college, then joined the Army and served in the Mexican War, then bought a hemp factory and raised a militia group. Today he was leading his cavalry forces against the Union, and doing so very effectively. In fact he routed the Yankees, and captured the town of Tompkinsville, Ky.

10 July 1864 – Jubal Early Threatens Washington

Fear, panic and a great desire to be elsewhere gripped residents of Washington, D.C. today. Included among the relocation victims were Abraham and Mary Lincoln, who normally spent the summer at the Soldier's Home but were summoned back to the White House as the Confederate forces of Jubal Early approached the outer suburbs. Fighting flared in Rockville and Gunpowder Ridge, as Lew Wallace continued to defend with raw recruits, 100-day men, and convalescent veterans.

11 July 1864 – The Original Beltway Bandits

Jubal Early's Confederate forces did what no other Southern men accomplished during the entire War: he invaded at least the suburbs of Washington D.C. Silver Spring, MD, suffered the brunt of the attack, with particular attention to what might seem like an unusual military target, the home of the Postmaster General. Nearly forgotten today, Montgomery Blair was an immensely powerful man in the Washington of those times. Both in his own right and through several sons, sons-in-law and nephews he had fingers in a great number of pies, even to St. Louis Mo. Defending the city was Gen. Lew Wallace, better known today as the author of the novel "Ben-Hur". He was not doing well with his cobbled-together army of cripples and new recruits, and was anxiously awaiting the arrival of the Sixth Corps regulars from City Point, Va.

12 July 1864 – The Original Beltway Bandits, cont.

Gen. Jubal Early, CSA, had accomplished what no other Confederate had pulled off during the entire war: attacking the enemy capital. After skirmishing in the suburbs of Silver Spring with the hastily thrown together defensive forces of Gen. Lew Wallace, Early had hoped to assault the seat of Federal power in the center of the city. After examining the area of Ft. Stevens and finding it inhabited by regulars of the Sixth Corps he changed his mind. Joining the regulars to view the situation was Abraham Lincoln. A young Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr., was alarmed when bullets began to hit nearby. "Get down, you damn fool!" he shouted at his commander-in-chief. Lincoln obediently took cover.

13 July 1863 – Gettysburg Aftermath

On the military front things were grim for the Union today: the Army of Northern Virginia made good its escape over the Potomac River from the desultory pursuit by Gen. George Meade. On the civilian front they were downright disastrous: the New York Draft Riots broke out. There had been grumbling about the draft since the law was passed. The rules allowing the wealthy to buy “substitutes” and exemptions led to slogans like “a rich man’s war is a poor man’s fight”. Lots were drawn Saturday and published in the newspapers on Sunday. This day, a mob of mostly immigrant workingmen formed. Talk turned to speeches, and these progressed to an attack on the draft office. This spread to looting of businesses and then wholesale chaos. Police and what few army men were on hand were overwhelmed and soon gave up trying to control the mobs. Additional troops were ordered to rush to New York to restore order. They came from Gettysburg.

14 July 1863 – Gettysburg Aftermath, New York City Draft Riots

The prospect of a military draft had caused grumbles. When the lots were actually drawn yesterday the resentment had exploded into riots in New York City. Mobs ruled the streets, stores were looted and burned, and the police were utterly helpless. Today the rioting spread to other cities, including Boston, Portsmouth N.H., upstate New York and as far away as Wooster, Ohio. In New York the rage was beginning to focus on innocent blacks, who despite having no connection or control over the draft, were seen as the “reason” the war was being fought at all. The mob of mostly immigrant Irish workingmen began to target black neighborhoods, beating anyone on the street, and setting fires, even at a Negro church and orphanage. Later estimates had at least 100 people killed or wounded in the chaos, and property damage of well over \$1.5 million in 1863 currency (probably closer to \$10 million today)

15 July 1862 – the CSS Arkansas

The CSS Arkansas was not engaged in an operation today, in fact she was just hanging around the Yazoo River north of Vicksburg undergoing shakedown tests. The newly completed ironclad was the pride of the Confederate river fleet, so there was much distress when she was set upon by the US vessels Carondelet and Tyler. These two proved to be just the lead ships of nearly the entire Union fleet on the Mississippi. The Arkansas and her commander, Lt. Isaac Brown, pulled off an amazing and audacious feat: they ran the length of the Union fleet, fighting all the way, finally escaping to the protection of the Vicksburg guns, anchoring under the cliffs. Brown got a commendation from Jefferson Davis and promotion to the rank of commander. US fleet commander Farragut got indigestion and began to rethink his strategy.

16 July 1864 – Johnston vexes Davis

Confederate Gen. Joseph Johnston’s assignment was straightforward, if not exactly simple: keep Gen. William T. Sherman’s army out of as much of Georgia as possible, and most definitely out of Atlanta. Unfortunately Johnston’s notion of how to accomplish this had so far consisted of retreating every time Sherman got close to him. (Sherman’s habit of maneuvering to flank Johnston’s line contributed a lot to this tendency.) Jefferson Davis was beginning to despair of Johnston’s ability to win, and telegraphed him today demanding to know, specifically, his plans. Johnston could only reply that his plan “...must therefore depend upon that of the enemy. It is mainly to watch for a opportunity to fight to advantage. We are trying to put Atlanta in condition to be held for a day or two by the Georgia militia, that army movements may be freer and wider.” The unemployment line loomed.

17 July 1864 – Johnston relieved

The long-expected axe fell on the career of Joseph Eggleston Johnston today. His tenure as head of the Army (and Department) of Tennessee had been one of continual decline, retreat, desertion and despair. Johnston had been in many ways one of the great Confederate generals since the days of First Bull Run, but his talents were not up to taking on William Tecumseh Sherman. What had finally sunk Johnston’s job was the fateful act of telling the truth to his Commander in Chief: that it was not possible for him to prevent Sherman from taking Atlanta, Ga. Davis wrote today that “...as you failed to arrest the advance of the enemy to the vicinity of Atlanta, far in the interior of Georgia, and express no confidence that you can defeat or repel him, you are hereby relieved from command...” Appointed to replace him was what was left of Gen. John Bell Hood.

18 July 1862 – Morgan Raids Indiana

One does not often think of important Civil War actions taking place in...Indiana. One such, however, occurred today, and it was not the last to take place in places which considered themselves safely ensconced in the middle of the Union. John Hunt Morgan, colonel of cavalry, had been raiding in Kentucky. Today he and his men set sail across the mighty Ohio and had their way with the citizenry of Newburg, In., near Evansville. Half of southern Illinois, Indiana and Ohio went into a panic.

19 July 1863 – Morgan Raids Ohio

Col. John Hunt Morgan had been on one of his periodic raids into “secure” Union territory across the Ohio River for several days. His command of around 1200 cavalrymen now faced a problem: getting back across the river to safety in Kentucky. The USS Moose and the steamer Allegheny Belle stood in his way, and Union militia and regulars were closing in from behind. Finally having to fight his way out, he lost 120 killed and nearly 700 captured in what would be the only Civil War battle fought on Ohio soil. The survivors decided July in Pennsylvania might be nice.

20 July 1861 – Prelude to Manassas

Generals on both sides maneuvered their forces today and made their plans for a battle to be fought on the fields of north Virginia almost in sight of Washington. From Centerville, from Winchester, from the Shenandoah Valley came the Confederates. Joseph Johnston was their commander, and he planned an attack on the Federal left. Federal commander McDowell, whose men had been retreating from Centerville in terrible heat with little water or rations, likewise planned to attack his enemy’s left. Near the little town of Manassas ran the creek called Bull Run.

21 July 1861 – First Manassas

This was it. The battle that would settle, and thereby end, the Civil War. Near the little town of Manassas, Virginia, where the creek called Bull Run flowed, Gen. Irwin McDowell marched through the night to attack the Confederate left, hoping to roll up the flank. They bounced off Thomas J Jackson instead, who got the nickname “Stonewall” this day from Bernard Bee, who was soon shot dead. This afternoon the Confederate attack on the Union left had better success and amateur soldiers began to retreat through sightseers who had come out from Washington to view the spectacle.

22 July 1861 – Manassas aftermath

Bad enough to lose a big battle; worse yet to lose one in front of many witnesses just outside your nation’s capital. Gen. Irwin McDowell’s career as head of the Union armies was over, despite the fact that the loss was due more to untrained troops than bad planning. Gen. George McClellan’s mastery of the art of self-promotion was about to pay off with a major career move.

23 July 1863 – Gettysburg aftermath

The plan was straightforward: Gen. Meade assigned Maj. Gen. William French to take his 3rd Corps through Manassas Gap and cut the Army of Northern Virginia in half. Like many of Meade’s plans in the aftermath of Gettysburg, this one just didn’t work out either. Lee knew the passes were there and he had them all guarded. A fierce resistance by a brigade stalled the assault for hours. In those hours, Longstreet and Hill’s corps managed a last burst of speed into the Luray Valley and safety.

24 July 1864 – Early wins at Kernstown

Despite all the fighting that had taken place in the vicinity over the last four years, today’s disputation is known only as the Second Battle of Kernstown. Jubal Early, in a virtual recreation of Stonewall Jackson’s actions in Kernstown I, hit George Crook’s defending Federals in the center, after the left had been rolled by Breckinridge and the right hurt by Ramseur. The day ended with the familiar sight of Federals in flight for Winchester.

25 July 1861 – The Crittenden Compromise

There had been attempts at compromises for years, even decades in attempts to reconcile the institution of slavery with the American ideals of freedom for all men. Today the last of these compromise offers passed US the Senate by a vote of 30-5. Known as the Crittenden Resolution, it was a statement that the Union was fighting “to defend and maintain the supremacy of the Constitution and to preserve the Union” and not to interfere with slavery. This last attempt to fend off more secession and wider war did neither.

26 July 1863 – End of the Road for Morgan

Today was the end of the road for John Hunt Morgan. He had set forth with 1200 troopers on July 8 on a raid into southern Indiana and Ohio, hoping to be supported by Confederate sympathizers, and raise morale in the South after the fall of Vicksburg and loss at Gettysburg. Support did not materialize, his retreat was blocked by Union gunboats, and he had had to flee, losing men every day. Finally trapped near Salineville, Ohio, he and his remaining 364 officers and men surrendered today.

27 July 1863 – William Lowmes Yancey

William Lowndes Yancey died this day in Montgomery, Alabama, a frustrated man. His history is interesting: he was Southern born. After his father died his mother remarried an avid abolitionist and the family moved to New York. Yancey lived there until he was a student at Williams College in Massachusetts when he abruptly dropped out and moved back South to read law under an old friend of his father. He was an orator of some note, and so devoted to the South that he was advocating secession years before the events of Ft. Sumter actually occurred. His ambition was always to be President of a Southern Confederacy, but he was too radical even for them and was passed over in favor of Jefferson Davis. He spent the war years in a “loyal opposition” working to restrain even what limited powers Davis had.

28 July 1861

Confederate forces--many of whom had been Texas cowboys and ranch hands just weeks ago--continued their triumphant sweep through what in later years would be known as New Mexico, today taking a fort at St. Augustine Springs, NM, from Capt. John R. Baylor without a shot being fired. Rebel troops also occupied New Madrid, Mo., an important chokepoint on the Mississippi River. And Maj. Gen. George McClellan was named to command the new Army of the Potomac, which some would consider another Confederate victory.

29 July 1864 – Early crosses the Potomac

First it was Antietam. The next year it was Gettysburg. The people of southern Maryland and Pennsylvania were learning to get very nervous as midsummer approached. Their misgivings were well-founded as Jubal Early and company crossed the Potomac today, continuing the excursion which had briefly threatened the very gates of Washington itself. Union cavalry was pursuing, and there was little opportunity for Early to commit much outrage. Folks were fearful nonetheless and those who could afford to, sought to be elsewhere for awhile.

30 July 1864 – The Crater

The 48th Pennsylvania regiment was made up primarily of men who had been coal miners in civilian life. As the siege of Petersburg dragged on, the idea arose to dig a tunnel under the Confederate lines. It was dug, and filled with gunpowder, and today the fuse was lit. The result was disaster...for the Union. The initial explosion killed some 280 Confederates, but the subsequent Battle of the Crater was mishandled and poorly led. Casualty totals were 1500 Confederates to 4000 Union killed. This does not include wounded or missing.

31 July 1864 – Chambersburg

Gen. Jubal Early's Confederate cavalry had been on an extended raid into the North, attempting to force Lincoln to pull forces away from Grant's siege of Petersburg, Va. He had gone to the gates of Washington and been driven off. He had gone as far as Chambersburg in Pennsylvania, demanded a ransom, and when it was not paid, burned a good part of the city. Today he was suddenly under attack by Gen. Averel's Federal cavalry and headed for Cumberland, Md.

