

THE JOHNSTON JOURNAL SONS OF CONFEDERATE VETERANS

Albert Sidney Johnston Camp 67 – Houston, Texas
Wednesday, 16 December 2009

Join us for our

"Annual Candlelight Memorial Ceremony"

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

"To you, Sons of Confederate Veterans, we will commit the vindication of the cause for which we fought. To your strength will be given the defense of the Confederate soldier's good name, the guardianship of his history, the emulation of his virtues, the perpetuation of those principles which he loved and which you love also, and those ideals which made him glorious and which you also cherish."

Lt General Stephen Dill Lee

"The cause of the South is the cause of us all."

Confederate Vice President Alexander Stephens



This Month's Meeting

Each December the Albert Sidney Johnston Camp 67 of the Sons of Confederate Veterans hosts its traditional candlelight ceremony. In the ceremony, each member is invited to stand before the camp and tell us all a bit about his Confederate Ancestor(s) and then light a candle in memory of his ancestor.

This is one of the most memorable events of the year in our camp and we hope you can join us. Also, visitors are particularly wellcome at the ceremony, so please bring along spouses, family members, friends and others and join us.

Events & Announcements

The following nominations for 2010 officers are presented for consideration

Commander	Ev Gardner
1st Lt. Commander	Bill Holmes
2nd	John Beard
3rd LT.	Peter Gryska
Adjutant	Dodd Eastham

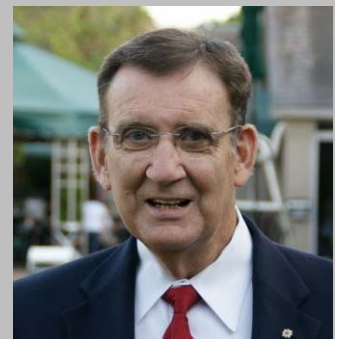
Unelected.	
Chaplain	Raymond Holder
Color sergeant	Russell Cowart
Johnston Journal Editor	R M Shivers

We will accept nominees from the floor at the December meeting, then vote on the officers.

We still need Aide de Camps.

The Commander's Corridor

Please lets each of us remember our Confederate ancestors during this once a year of special remembrance. Their service to the cause to which they fought for is the reason we come together. I, personally, am awed by their dedication to our cause. this is also the meeting that we will elect our officers for the coming year. I will be seeing all of you there. Please rsvp.



Raymond Holder, Commander

Albert Sidney Johnston camp # 67 of Houston, Texas



This Day in Confederate History – Dec

“Let us not, then, despond, my countrymen; but, relying on the never-failing mercies and protecting care of our God, let us meet the foe with fresh defiance, with unconquered and unconquerable hearts.”

*Jefferson Davis
President*

1 Dec 1864 – Battle of Franklin - Aftermath

All U.S. Gen. John Schofield had been trying to do for some time was get back to the main Union fortifications at Nashville and rejoin Gen. George Thomas. He had been forced to stop and fight the Battle of Franklin, Tenn., yesterday, and the damage inflicted on the Army of Tennessee had been disastrous. Nevertheless, Schofield withdrew and proceeded on, and reached the Tennessee capital today. The Union fortifications there were already substantial, and with the addition of Schofield became well-nigh impregnable. Hood was still in pursuit with the shattered remains of his force, but was too late. His only choices now were to settle in and put Nashville under siege, or bypass it and head North with a huge Union threat at his back.

2 Dec 1862 – Skirmish near Corpus Christi

Action in the Texas-Louisiana coastal regions was still in a rather tentative stage. Both sides were gathering information they knew they were going to need in the future. One such project was the trip of the Confederate steamship Queen of the Bay which was chugging slowly today around Corpus Christi Pass taking depth soundings. Captain H. Wilkes was going about this chore methodically when he was unexpectedly set upon by two smaller boats sent from the USS Sachem. Unprepared for attack and unable to escape, Wilkes took the drastic step of running his ship up on the beach. While the crew escaped, Wilkes fired the ship's guns at the attackers, driving one away and the damaging the other. The damaged Union boat also wound up coming ashore and the crew, carrying an officer who had been wounded, had to march 30 miles overland to get back to another Union position where they were picked up.

3 Dec 1864 – Battle of Franklin - Aftermath

Gen. George H. Thomas had been holding Nashville, Tennessee for some time now, and his forces had just been augmented by those of Gen. John Schofield. On the way to link up with Thomas, Schofield had inadvertently done wonders to boost the Union's chances, by engaging in the Battle of Franklin, in which the Confederate forces had been hurled at Union defenders in repeated charges, resulting in tremendous casualties and the irreplaceable loss of six generals. Hood could not attack; against the Nashville fortifications it would have been suicidal. All he could do was proclaim that Thomas and Schofield were trapped, and send Nathan Bedford Forrest's cavalry on harassing raids. Thomas, meanwhile, was being prodded from Washington to go on the attack himself.

4 Dec 1863 – Longstreet Leaves Knoxville

Gen. James Longstreet and his corps had been detached from the Army of Northern Virginia and sent West in a desperate move to shore up the defenses of Confederate Tennessee. It had been a valiant effort, but in the end it had been too little, too late. Their last assault had been on the ramparts of Fort Sanders at Knoxville, which they had taken but could not hold. With Grant's reinforcements on the way, Longstreet was now establishing winter quarters farther east and north, at a place called Greeneville. This was, in terms of travel time, about equidistant from potential battle sites in the west or in Virginia, enabling the force to be shifted to whichever area needed them most.

5 Dec 1863 – Longstreet Leaves Knoxville, cont.

It was a day of considerable activity for this late in the year, but each individual action was small and more or less incidental to armies being on the move. In Tennessee it was the corps of James Longstreet marching away from Knoxville and toward planned winter quarters in Greenville, Tenn. This led to skirmishes around the Clinch River, particularly at Walker's Ford. Other unpleasantness occurred at Raccoon Ford, Va., and Crab Gap, Tenn.

6 Dec 1862 – Sioux Uprising

Not all the actions of the Civil War took part between the forces of the Union and the Confederacy. Out on the western frontier the original Americans were not short of grievances with the white settlers who had been overtaking their land for hundreds of years now. With the withdrawal of every available soldier for duty in the East, the opportunity to correct some of these offenses took hold in some people's minds. The Sioux confined to a reservation in southwestern Minnesota were severely short of food and left the reservation to get some. Things soon got out of hand and it turned into a massacre over a period of several weeks. The number of dead is estimated at 400-600 whites. After the Sioux were defeated, 1000 were arrested. Today Abraham Lincoln signed orders for the execution, by hanging, of 19 believed to be ringleaders.

7 Dec 1861 – The Trent Affair, cont.

The word had not yet percolated through the U.S. Navy of all the havoc being caused by the USS San Jacinto's capture of the British mail ship Trent on the high seas; the level of outrage it sparked in Britain was not yet known to all. Today the USS Santiago de Cuba pulled exactly the same stunt in the mouth of the Rio Grande River. The British schooner Eugenia Smith was halted in international waters and searched. She proved to be carrying Confederate purchasing agent, J. W. Zacharie from New Orleans. He was taken off and arrested. When this sort of thing had been done by the Royal Navy against American ships some time earlier it had contributed to the start of the War of 1812.

8 Dec 1862 – Confederate Manpower Shortages

Robert E. Lee sent a letter requesting more troops, and Jefferson Davis wrote back to him today that he had none to send, and if he did have surplus soldiers, they would most likely be sent to the Western Theater where the need was becoming dire. "In Tennessee and Mississippi the disparity between our armies and those of the enemy is so great as to fill me with apprehension," he wrote today. He also mentioned that he was leaving immediately on a trip West to see what could be done about the situation.

9 Dec 1862 – Fredericksburg

On the heights opposite Fredericksburg, Va., the Grand Divisions of the Army of the Potomac were being prepared for the strife to come. Orders were issued to the division commanders today to supply their men with 60 rounds of ammunition apiece, and to prepare three days' supply of cooked-in-advance rations. Aside from these preparations there was little going on. The Confederate defenders had burned the bridges over the Rappahannock River, and the waterway was far too deep, not to mention cold, to wade across this time of year. Action had to wait on the arrival of pontoon bridges, which were on the way from Washington, but moving slowly.

10 Dec 1862 – Fredericksburg, cont.

The Army of the Potomac was making its final preparations today for the assault across the Rappahannock River tomorrow. Rations were being cooked, weapons checked, ammunition issued. Most importantly, the pontoon rafts which would be used to build temporary bridges across the waterway were checked over and readied.

11 Dec 1862 – Fredericksburg, cont.

After long delays, the pontoon bridges had arrived and today were put to use. Five bridges were projected, up and down the Rappahannock. The one directly in front of the town was making no progress: every time the engineers went to put it together they were driven off by gunfire from Confederate sharpshooters in the buildings at the riverfront. Burnside ordered the cannons to demolish the buildings, but the sharpshooters used the rubble for cover. Finally a Federal unit crossed the river in boats, far enough upstream to be out of range, and marched down and cleared out the marksmen. After this the central bridge was completed, and the Federal occupation of the mostly-deserted city began.

12 Dec 1862 – Fredericksburg, cont.

The first part of the battle had started yesterday, as the Federal troops under Gen. Ambrose Burnside had struggled to build pontoon bridges to transport their men across the Rappahannock River while under fire from Confederate sharpshooters. After repeated failures the effort had finally succeeded and Union troops moved to establish their beachhead before night fell. When morning came it was hard to tell—a thick fog had risen from the river overnight and filled the valley, lasting until noon. Troops continued to move in the limited visibility, but slowly, and when the fog finally broke up it was far too late in the day to launch an assault. The major activity on the Union side was to move as many men as possible as far up the hill as possible. Looking down on the action, Lee sent orders to Stonewall Jackson, guarding another ford farther downstream, to rejoin the main force.

13 Dec 1862 – Fredericksburg, cont.

Again, like yesterday, fog rose from the Rappahannock in the night, not dispersing until midmorning. As soon as it did, the cannons exploded and the first wave of Union troops began the charge up the rise called Marye's Heights. At the top waited the Army of Northern Virginia, which had had days to dig in and prepare. Longstreet's men held the left, Stonewall Jackson's the right, backed up on the lower elevation by J.E.B. Stuart's cavalry. Every wave that marched up the hill was slaughtered and driven back, and then followed by another wave. This futility continued for five assaults before sunset, around 4:30 p.m. this time of year, and another one after dark. All met the same fate as the first. This is not to say the Federal attack did not wreak harm of its own, but the casualties were hugely lopsided: 12,635 killed, wounded or taken prisoner for the Union, out of some 114,000 men engaged, versus 5309 casualties for the Army of Northern Virginia's force of 72,000. It was after this battle that Robert E. Lee made his famous remark, "I wish these people would go away and let us alone."

14 Dec 1862 – Fredericksburg, cont.

Five bloody, futile charges had been made up the side of a rise called Marye's Heights in Fredericksburg yesterday, and today the proud Army of the Potomac was in tatters. Out of 114,000 men assembled nearly 13,000 had become casualties, either killed, wounded, taken prisoner, or fled. The opposing Army of Northern Virginia, although battered, was unscathed on the heights above the Rappahannock River. This morning Burnside had a brilliant idea: his men should charge the heights once again. His commanders were aghast, and some reports suggest outright mutiny might have occurred if they had not been able to talk him out of the notion. Instead the work turned to finding and tending the wounded, and burying the dead. Lee, in turn, was criticized by some in Richmond for not counterattacking.

15 Dec 1862 – Fredericksburg, cont.

The blood still flowed on the field and in the hospitals set up in nearly every building still standing in the rear of Federal and Confederate lines alike, as the defeated Union army retreated back across the Rappahannock River. Blood, of a more metaphorical and political nature, flowed in the hallways of the War Departments in the respective capitals. In Richmond there were those who criticized Robert E. Lee for not following his successful defense of the heights with a counterattack. These critics seemed unaware that even after the bloodletting, the Confederate army was considerably outnumbered, and Federal artillery was undamaged across the river. In Washington, the rage against Burnside rained in from all directions. Hooker's was perhaps the most vociferous, a fact which would be remembered later. Only Lincoln was unable to criticize; having fired McClellan for failing to fight, he could not very well castigate Burnside for having done so.

16 Dec 1862 – Fredericksburg, cont.

In the aftermath of Fredericksburg, the defeated Union army completed its withdrawal across the pontoon bridges erected at such a tremendous cost just a few days earlier. Climbing back up the heights on their side of the river, and looking back at the heights opposite that they had tried six times to take, they proceeded on just as far as Falmouth and Stafford Heights. There the exhausted men stopped and set camp for the winter. The countryside was soon scoured of every piece of lumber, brick and anything which could be used to construct cabins or huts or at least fortify the flimsy tents for the winter. So much wood would be scavenged that trees died for miles around. When the spring rains of 1863 came, much valuable topsoil would wash away. The area would not recover its agricultural value for decades.

17 Dec 1861 – The Trent Affair, cont.

The first newspapers from London printed after the "Trent Affair" had exploded there, reached the former colonies in America today, and reactions were strong and immediate. Capt. Charles Wilkes, U.S. Navy, had stopped the British mail ship "Trent" on the high seas by force of arms, and had removed the Confederate commissioners Mason and Slidell, who now languished in a prison in Boston Harbor. To which the London Times commented: "By Capt. Wilkes let the Yankee breed be judged. Swagger and ferocity, built on a foundation of vulgarity and cowardice, these are the characteristics, and these are the most prominent marks by which his countrymen, generally speaking, are known all over the world." In more diplomatic circles, Lord Russell was debating whether to demand an apology or just declare war.

18 Dec 1861 – The Trent Affair, cont.

Yesterday it had seemed as though the British Empire was on the verge of a declaration of war against the United States of America. The cause of this fury was the oft-mentioned "Trent Affair", in which the USS San Jacinto, Charles Wilkes, Captain, overhauled the British mail packet Trent outside of Bermuda waters and forced her crew to hand over the Confederate commissioners to Europe, Mason and Slidell. Today, however, the tone was softened considerably. Lord John Russell, British cabinet member, was assigned the task of writing the instructions on the matter to England's ambassador in Washington, Lord Lyons. Lyons was instructed to request an explanation for the action, and an apology, on the assumption that Wilkes had been overzealous and not acting on specific instructions from his government.

19 Dec 1863 – Florida Saltworks Destroyed

It may not sound like much of an accomplishment. Certainly few of these were ever written on it, and absolutely no military songs or marches ever were aired in honor of this voyage of the USS Restless. But her captain, Acting Master W.R. Browne, had his assignment and pursued his enemy relentlessly: the salt suppliers of St. Andrew's Bay, Florida. He had been on this mission for some weeks all along the Florida shore, and had achieved quite a bit of demolition, and today even Browne may have been startled when he sat down to write up his official report. Articles destroyed included "within the past 10 days 290 saltworks, 33 covered wagons, 12 flatboats, 2 sloops (five tons each), 6 ox carts, 4000 bushels of salt, 268 buildings at the different saltworks, 529 iron kettles averaging 150 gallons each, 105 iron boilers for boiling brine." And, he added, "it is believed that the enemy destroyed as many more to prevent us from doing so."

20 Dec 1860 – South Carolina Secession

On December 20, 1860, delegates convened in Charleston and voted unanimously to secede from the Union. When it was seen that Abraham Lincoln would be elected, a number of conventions organized around the Deep South to discuss the options. States with strong pro-secession movements such as Alabama and Mississippi sent delegates to the convention where they advised the Carolinians to "take the lead and secede at once". On December 20, 1860, South Carolinians in Charleston voted to secede from the Union. President James Buchanan declared the secession illegal but did not act to stop it for he also declared going to war to stop it was also illegal.

21 Dec 1861 – The Trent Affair, cont.

The death of Albert, Prince Consort to Queen Elizabeth, may have had the nation in official mourning but this did not keep the Empire's bureaucracy from their work. The greatest empire of the day was not about to take much more misbehavior from an upstart ex-colony, in this case over the seizure on the high seas of two passengers from one of Her Majesty's mail ships. Lord Lyons, negotiator, wrote to his superior Lord Russell, the Foreign Minister: "I am so convinced that unless we give our friends here a good lesson this time, we shall have the same trouble with them again very soon...Surrender or war will have a very good effect on them."

22 Dec 1862 – Fredericksburg, cont.

Gen. Burnside had not really wanted command of the Union's Army of the Potomac, but had taken it when ordered. His first battle, Fredericksburg, had been a disaster, poorly coordinated on the flanks and the center consisting of repeated charges uphill in the open against Confederates in prepared defensive works. If that wasn't bad enough, today he was facing the consequences in a meeting with Lincoln and the cabinet.

23 Dec 1861 – The Trent Affair, cont.

Lord Lyons, his diplomatic patience nearing exhaustion, finally presented his government's ultimatum. Her Majesty Queen Victoria hereby made a demand for the surrender of Confederate agents Mason and Slidell, who had been taken off a British mail ship in mid-ocean in contravention of maritime law. Massachusetts Sen. Charles Sumner, who had a certain amount of jurisdiction because the two were being held in a prison in Boston Harbor, met with Mr. Lincoln and urged that the men be turned over, on the grounds that they were becoming an embarrassment. Lincoln was only too happy to agree, noting that "one war at a time" was entirely enough.

24 Dec 1862 – Galveston Occupied

In the only notable action of the day, Yankee infantry arrived to complete the occupation of Galveston, Tex. The city had been taken, and partially occupied, by Navy forces.

25 Dec 1861 – Stonewall at Home

In Winchester, VA, Gen. Thomas J. ("Stonewall") Jackson, on one of his rare leaves home, had a quiet dinner with his wife.

26 Dec 1863 – CSS Alabama

Captain Raphael Semmes, Confederate States Navy, now less than a week arrived from the Indies to South Africa, managed to capture and destroy the American ships Sonora and Highlander, both at anchor at the entrance of the Straits of Malacca. Semmes wrote home that one of the ships' masters told him he had "been expecting every day for the last three years go fall in with you...now that it is over I feel quite relieved." The major financial impact of Semmes' efforts was on the rapidly rising insurance rates being charged to US flag shipping companies.

27 Dec 1864 – Army of Tennessee

The Army of Tennessee had once been the premier fighting force of the Confederacy in the West. The western army was supposed to defend a line from the Cumberland Gap to the Mississippi River. Cursed with a string of poor commanders to perform this overwhelming task, they had spent their last energies in disastrous battles at Franklin and then Nashville. Today they continued their retreat from the latter, crossing the Tennessee River in the direction of Tupelo, Mississippi. Between casualties and desertions the army had nearly ceased to exist as a fighting force.

28 Dec 1863 – CSA Finances and Manpower

On this date the Congress of the Confederacy faced up to the fact that the struggling new nation was basically broke, and also increasingly short of manpower. To correct the former, there was passed what was called the “tax in kind”, taking from every state one-tenth of all agricultural produce. To correct the manpower shortage, the system whereby a man could purchase a substitute to take his place in the army was abolished. This accomplished little as virtually every white man who could serve was either already doing so.

29 Dec 1861 – Indian Tribes in the War

While a civil war was going on between North and South, another one was in progress in the (theoretically) independent Indian Territory. The Creek tribe, which favored the Union, moved en masse to a distant part of the territory. They had been opposed by the Confederate-leaning Choctaw and Chickasaw. The Seminole and Cherokee nations were themselves divided, with large factions favoring each side. One Cherokee, in fact, Stand Watie, not only enlisted in the Confederate army but rose to the rank of brigadier general. While some native people had welcomed escaped slaves and allowed them to join and intermarry into their tribes, others practiced slave ownership themselves in areas where it was permitted.

30 Dec 1861 – Union Paper Money

The United States Government, as well as independent banks in several cities, today suspended “specie payment.” This refers to the fact that at this time paper money was viewed with suspicion unless it could be readily converted into the equivalent amount of gold or silver. The suspension of specie frequently led to drastic inflation as the value of paper currency declined, sometimes to zero if the bank issuing it failed. The matter of a stable and uniform currency for the entire country was not yet settled and would not be for some time.

31 Dec 1863 – Depressing New Year’s Eve

There was not much in the way of champagne-drinking, horn-tooting or other midnight revelry on New Year's Eve in the Confederate capital this year. Even the Richmond Examiner was being so bold as to put it in a headline: "To-day closes the gloomiest year of our struggle." After Gettysburg, after the loss of the Mississippi, after the fall of Chattanooga, few saw much hope for improvement.

