
SCWH NEWSLETTER

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Society of Civil War Historians

Spring 2015

A Letter from the President

Spring is now upon us and with it the end of the Sesquicentennial. Many among us may have mixed feelings about this. On one hand, we may find relief at not having so many events and speaking engagements—on the other, we might lament that we haven't as many events and speaking engagements. We might also consider the definition and periodization of the 150th. There is little doubt in my mind that most of the conferences, exhibits, television programming, and features in national newspapers will end in 2015 with Lincoln's assassination. But this approach corresponds with much of the reconciliationist sentiment of the late-19th century that confined the war to events of April 1861–April 1865, thus leaving out many of the causes, consequences, and ramifications of the war. Do we not, as historians of the war, have an obligation to push the public to consider a more expansive *era of the Civil War* that includes the messy and politically divisive questions of Reconstruction or ponders the long-term legacies of the war? If we agree that we have such an obligation, how do we go about generating this public interest?

Biennial Conference: Perhaps these and other related topics will inspire discussion for our next biennial conference, to be held at The Chattanooga Hotel, Chattanooga, Tennessee, from June 2 through 4, 2016 (please note the change in date). The call for papers has been issued, and we welcome both panel proposals and individual papers on the Civil War era, broadly defined, from academic historians, graduate students, and professionals who interpret history in museums, national parks, archives, and other public facilities. The deadline for submissions is September 11, 2015.

Changes to the SCWH Board: Amy Murrell Taylor has reached the end of her term as an at-large member of the Board. We would like to thank her for her committed service especially her work

with the Outreach Committee to increase membership and help provide a social media presence for the society. The Board has elected **Kenneth Noe** as the new at-large-member. He is Alumni Professor and Draughton Professor of Southern History at Auburn University and the author or editor of seven books including *The Yellowhammer War: Alabama in the Civil War and Reconstruction* (2014) and *Reluctant Rebels: The Confederates Who Joined the Army after 1861* (2010). **Daniel Sutherland** will join the Board as the new president-elect. He is Distinguished Professor of History at the University of Arkansas and the author or editor of more than fifteen books, including the Tom Watson Brown Prize winner, *A Savage Conflict: The Decisive Role of Guerrillas in the American Civil War* (2009). Please join me in welcoming them both.

Tom Watson Brown Book Award: We are in the earliest stages of planning for the Tom Watson Brown Book Award dinner held at the annual meeting of the Southern Historical Association. This year the meeting will be in Little Rock, Arkansas, from November 11-14. One of the benefits of membership is free attendance at the dinner and a copy of the prize-winning book. This dinner has become one of the highlights of the Society, and I would like to take a moment to thank Tad Brown for his generous and enthusiastic support. I would also like to thank this year's committee of Tad Brown, John Inscoe, James Huston, and Judy Giesberg for their hard work.

Membership: Please remember that seating at the dinner is limited, and invitations will be sent to current members in mid-to-late August. RSVP's are due by October 1. Your membership needs to be current as of August 1 in order to receive an invitation to the event. In addition to the dinner and a reduced registration price at the biennial conference, membership comes with a subscription to the *Journal of the Civil War Era*, edited by William Blair and published by the UNC Press. If

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BOOKS IN REVIEW

Stephen D. Engle, Book Review Editor

Colin Edward Woodward, *Marching Masters: Slavery, Race, and the Confederate Army during the Civil War*. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2014. Pp. 283. \$39.50.

In *Marching Masters*, Woodward's argument is two-fold: that slavery and the desire of southerners to protect the institution drove both the development and founding of the Confederate nation and the military strategy that sought to secure that government. In reality, Woodward's thesis is much simpler: Confederate soldiers understood that they were fighting a war in defense of slavery.

Woodward's position is clear and his evidence compelling. Fundamentally, he shows the struggle of the average soldier with the cause that may or may not directly impact him. In order to do this, Woodward also delves into the racial attitudes that so defined individual sentiments.

Marching Masters is a fine book that fits well into the evolution of motivation literature during the past couple of decades. Since scholars like James McPherson clearly placed slavery at the forefront of the war's causes, books and articles have appeared refining and strengthening this notion with Woodward's effort contributing significantly.

Brian D. McKnight University of Virginia at Wise

Wendy Hamand Venet. *A Changing Wind: Commerce & Conflict in Civil War Atlanta*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2014. Pp. 280. \$30.00

This fine book reminds us that war means chaos. In 1860, Atlanta still had only about 10,000 residents. By 1863 it had become, as Venet puts it aptly, the "second city of the Confederacy," with several thousand military-industrial workers. But this sudden growth should not be confused with true prosperity. The influx of war workers, refugees, and wounded soldiers overwhelmed the city. Even before its bombardment, capture, and destruction by Union forces in 1864, Atlanta was full of stinking hospital facilities and fresh graves. Using original research in newspapers, diaries, and archival governmental records, Venet shows how the war disrupted the lives of a diverse group of people—blacks and whites, men and women, adults and children, secessionists and unionists. For many slaves, the costs of the war were more than offset by new opportunities for

freedom. For most other Atlantans, the dominant experience was Sherman's "hard hand of war."

Mark R. Wilson, University of North Carolina at Charlotte

George Kimball, edited by Alan D. Gaff and Donald H. Gaff. *A Corporal's Story: Civil War Recollections of the Twelfth Massachusetts*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2014. Pp. 368. \$34.95.

The Civil War created its share of memoirists, but few matched the storytelling abilities of Corporal George Kimball, the author of the edited collection, *A Corporal's Story*. Kimball enlisted in the 12th Massachusetts (the Webster Regiment) in June 1861, and fought with his regiment at various engagements, including Antietam, Gettysburg, the Overland Campaign, and the Siege of Petersburg. He survived two grisly wounds and mustered out in July 1864. From 1883 to 1885, he published short recollections of his army service with a long-forgotten independent journal, *The Bivouac*. The capable editors of *A Corporal's Story*, Alan and Donald Gaff, have collected Kimball's scattered stories and arranged them in an exciting chronological narrative.

Unlike most memoirists, Kimball's tales are not overly muddled with tactical minutiae. Kimball preferred to describe the Civil War's intensely human moments, giving readers a taste of the war's dizzying highs and disheartening lows. He remembered fondly his mess

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you are unsure of your membership status, feel free to contact the UNC Press Journals Department at 919-962-4201 or UNCPress_Journals@unc.edu.

Web Site: The Society is pleased to announce that our new (and much more user friendly) website will be launched this spring. Many thanks to Jim Marten, Megan Kate Nelson, and Megan Bever—members of our Outreach Committee—for their diligent efforts on this venture.

Public History Task Force: I am likewise happy to report that we have established a Public History Task Force to suggest ways in which we might engage those professionals who interpret the Civil War at a variety of private, state, and national museums and parks. Thank you to Jennifer Murray and Mark Wetherington for their service on this committee.

I look forward to seeing many of you at Little Rock in November. Until then, please feel free to contact me if you have any suggestions or questions about the society.

Carrie Janney

A Corporal’s Story - Continued from page 2

mates who wrote the song, “John Brown’s Body.” He recalled the harrowing moments on the firing line at Antietam. He reminisced wallowing in pain in a hospital in Gettysburg, even getting stepped over by Robert E. Lee. Mostly, he recollected the curious behaviors of his friends, whose personalities left a lasting impression on him. In reflecting on the sad death of a private named Emerson who died at Andersonville, Kimball wrote, “Let us hope that what poor Emerson . . . suffered in the cause of his country and mankind, may weigh in his favor in that great day when God shall judge us all for the deeds we have done in the body.” By bringing Kimball’s rousing story to light, the editors have reminded us not to dismiss Civil War memoirs on principle. Indeed, they contain priceless information that gives Civil War history its life’s blood.

Timothy J. Orr, Old Dominion University

Historians of Civil War Western Theater to Meet in Kennesaw

The Historians of the Civil War Western Theater will meet at Kennesaw State University, Kennesaw, Georgia, on May 21-23. The meeting will be held at Kennesaw State University in Kennesaw, Georgia. Make your reservations at the Comfort Suites at Kennesaw State University, 3366 Busbee Drive NW. Phone: 678-275-2090. Ask for the Western Theater block and rates.

The meeting will be held on Friday at the Kennesaw State University Center for Continuing Education. On Saturday there will be a tour of the Kennesaw Mountain Battlefield National Park in the morning, and a tour of the Southern Museum of Civil War and Locomotive History in the afternoon.

The HCWWT is limited to individuals who have written about the Western Theater or Trans-Mississippi. For more information on the HCWWT or the meeting, go to the organization’s website at westerntheaterhistorians.org.

Hayes-Davis Wins Dallas CWRT McWhiney Award

The 2014 recipient of the Dallas Civil War Round Table’s Grady McWhiney Award of Merit “for significant contributions to the scholarship and preservation of Civil War history” is Bertram Hayes-Davis, a great-great grandson of Jefferson Davis. Hayes-Davis received this award at the January meeting.

Hayes-Davis serves as president of the Beauvoir Foundation. Since 1976 he has served as president of the Davis Family Association, and since 1988 as president of the Papers of Jefferson Davis. He is the former executive director of Beauvoir, the last home of Jefferson Davis, and the Presidential Library in Biloxi, Mississippi.

The Dallas Civil War Round Table has given this award since 1998, when Grady McWhiney was the first recipient. Dr. McWhiney, who died in 2006, was a founder of the Society of Civil War Historians. For more information on winners of the award, go to <http://cwrtDallas.org/dallas>.

SCWH CALL FOR PAPERS

The Society of Civil War Historians will host its biennial conference at The Chattanooga Hotel, Chattanooga, Tennessee, from June 2 through 4, 2016. The SCWH welcomes panel proposals or individual papers on the Civil War era, broadly defined. The goal of the conference is to promote the integration of social, military, political, and other forms of history on the Civil War era among historians, graduate students, and professionals who interpret history in museums, national parks, archives, and other public facilities.

The deadline for receipt of proposals is **September 11**. Please complete a submission form found on the SCWH website.

Panel proposal link is:

<http://richardscenter.psu.edu/conference-papers/panel-submission-form>.

Single paper proposal link is:

<http://richardscenter.psu.edu/conference-papers/single-paper-submission>

Proposals should include a title and abstract for the papers (approximately 250-300 words) and a short curriculum vitae from each participant. Panel submissions should have an overall title and statement about the thrust of the session.

For more information, see the Society's website at <http://scwh.la.psu.edu/>, or contact the Richards Center at (814) 863-0151. Final decisions on submissions will be made at the Southern Historical Association meeting in Little Rock, Arkansas.

Future Meeting Dates of the SCWH and SHA

2015 - November 11-14
Little Rock Marriott
Little Rock, Arkansas

2016 - November 2-5
Trade Winds Island Resort
St. Pete Beach, Florida

2017 - November 9-12
Sheraton Dallas Hotel
Dallas, Texas

2018 - November 8-11
Sheraton Birmingham Hotel
Birmingham, Alabama 35203

For back issues of the newsletter, go to <http://scwh.la.psu.edu/journal.shtml>

For a short history of the SCWH, go to <http://scwhl.la.psu.edu/about.shtml>

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