



THE drum roll

403rd Regular Meeting Volume 41 Number 5 January 5, 2024



PLEASE NOTE!!!!!!

The December meeting will be in person at the Arlington Hts. Library on Friday, January 5, 2024, and on ZOOM, at 7:00 P.M. The library is at the corner of W. Euclid Ave. and N. Dunton Ave. in Arlington Hts. Underground parking is available, and you can take the elevator to the second floor and be right at the meeting site.

The Birth of Combat Photography”

Larry Hewitt will present the who, what, where, when, why, and how the firm of McPherson & Oliver made photographic history. Between June 14 and July 9, 1863, the final 25 days of the 48-day siege of Port Hudson, McPherson & Oliver moved about the battlefield memorializing soldiers in action--and in combat! In the process of making this visual record of opposing armies actively engaged, an image of Union soldiers’ sharpshooting opposite the Priest Cap was not these two artists only claim to photographic fame. Other images include one taken at midnight (the first ever taken in the dark), one converted into a composite print (created by combining portions of two negatives), the Confederate army at the surrender ceremony, and examples of time-lapse photography.

McPherson & Oliver also produced the most widely circulated cartes-de-visite of the Civil War, three different views of “Whipped Peter.” But the duo seldom receives credit for these images of an abused slave. Other studios, including Matthew Brady’s, published them as their own work. As with the battlefield they immortalized, McPherson and Oliver deserve better.

About our speaker:

Lawrence Lee Hewitt, a native of Louisville, Kentucky, received his B.A. (1974) from the University of Kentucky and his M.A. (1977) and Ph.D. (1984) from Louisiana State University. He was the manager of the Port Hudson (1978-1982) and Camp Moore (1982-1986) Historic Sites in Louisiana and taught at Southeastern Louisiana University (1985-1996). He was a tenured full professor when he resigned to marry a native of Chicago, where he currently resides. The 1991 recipient of SLU’s President’s Award for Excellence in Research, the 1991 Charles L. Dufour Award, the 2011 Dr. Arthur W. Bergeron, Jr. Award, and the 2013 Nevins-Freeman Award, he is a past president of the Baton Rouge Civil War Round Table.

Hewitt’s publications include *Port Hudson, Confederate Bastion on the Mississippi* (1987), *The Confederate High Command...* (1990), *Leadership During the Civil War...* (1992), *Louisianians in the Civil War* (2002), *Kentuckians in Gray* (2008), four volumes of *Confederate Generals in the Western Theater* (2010-2017), *Lee and His Generals: Essays in Honor of T. Harry Williams* (2012), three volumes of *Confederate Generals in the Trans-Mississippi* (2013-2019), and, *To Succeed or Perish: The Diaries of Sergeant Edmund Trent Eggleston, 1st Mississippi Light Artillery Regiment, CSA* (2015), which won the 2016 General Basil W. Duke Literary Award. Andrew J. Wagenhoffer’s blog Civil War Books and Authors named Hewitt’s *Port Hudson: The Most Significant Battlefield Photographs of the Civil War* 2021 Book of the Year. Larry is currently writing biographies of David Glasgow Farragut and Richard Heron Anderson and researching a history of the 14th Louisiana Infantry.

Last month’s Program

STONEWALL JACKSON – THE MAN, THE LEGEND

Stonewall Jackson is one of the most famous personages to come out of the Civil War – a name known even to those with little or no interest in the war. However, fame tends to distort its human subject. On December 1, Rob Girardi explored the legend – and the man.

Thomas Jonathan Jackson was born in western Virginia, growing up in Clarksburg with an uncle who served as a father figure. The young Jackson exhibited a particular talent for mathematics, which saved him academically when he attended the US Military academy at West Point. There he was described as a student who was not brilliant, but was diligent. Ranked 59th out of 82 as a plebe, by his senior year he had improved to 17th of 60-plus class members (Girardi noted a contemporary opinion that, had there been a fifth year, Jackson might have vaulted to the head of the class!)

Jackson moved from his 1846 graduation into the Mexican-American War, where he served with distinction, brevetting to major – and took such a liking to Mexico that he considered converting to Catholicism. But he returned to the States, and eventually fell afoul of his commanding officer, William French, at Fort Meade. Jackson resigned from the Army and found himself teaching physics and artillery at the Virginia Military Institute. He was not well-regarded as a teacher, running his lessons by rote and earning nicknames such as “Tom Fool” and “Crazy Jack.” One student referred to him as “the worst teacher God ever made.”

Jackson’s fortunes abruptly shifted with the coming of the Civil War. He cast his lot with his native South, and on April 28, 1861, was assigned to Harper’s Ferry. In July, his brigade was one of Joseph Johnston’s units called from the Shenandoah Valley to Manassas, where Jackson not only proved crucial to the Confederate victory but earned his legendary nickname “Stonewall” – though the debate continues to this day whether Barnard Bee’s utterance “There stands Jackson like a stone wall” was meant as compliment or complaint.

Jackson’s star continued to rise. From March 22 through June 9 of 1862, his epic campaigning in the Shenandoah Valley covered 670 miles of marching and countermarching, tying up 60,000-plus Federal troops while never having more than

17,000 under his own command (and often less). Some of these soldiers were thus kept from joining George McClellan on the Peninsula, to which Jackson himself eventually moved. After Rebel victory in the Seven Days, Robert E. Lee shifted the primary front to Northern Virginia again by August, where Jackson played a starring role in the crushing of John Pope at Second Manassas.

By now, Stonewall Jackson had won worldwide renown - not only in the South, but in the North and even in Europe (especially England). As Girardi pointed out, even at this time, descriptions of Jackson were all over the map. His shabby appearance was noted, and he was considered a clumsy horseman. But success overrode any seeming negatives. His capture of Harper's Ferry and tenacious defense at Antietam added to his worldwide image; by late 1862 he was considered by British analysts to be the best general of the war, and possibly the world. (Girardi noted that Old Jack didn't do it alone, referring to his talented staff as the "stones" in the "stone wall.")

May 1863 saw Jackson's reputation reach even higher heights, first due to his performance at Chancellorsville, then to his mortal wounding there. Lee divided his already-outnumbered army and sent Jackson on a day-long flank march. Jackson's late afternoon charge shattered the Federal flank, and the fighting pushed on into the night; returning from a recon in front of the lines, the general was wounded by friendly fire and succumbed to complications (pneumonia) 8 days later, on May 10, 1863.

Being struck down at the pinnacle of his success crested Jackson's fame to the utmost. Mourned

throughout the South, and indeed in other parts of the world, Stonewall Jackson obtained martyr status. His death was seen as a primary factor in the ultimate failure of the Confederacy, a view which only grew stronger as the war grew further in the past and the "Lost Cause" mythology spread. Not only were Jackson's death, burial, and re-burial sites shrines, so was the grave of his horse, and even of the arm helost at Chancellorsville. Girardi ran through examples of the voluminous amounts of Jacksonian tributes

in the decades following the war: coins, stamps, cards, and quotes (real or spurious) all contributed to the Jackson legend.

At this point, Girardi departed the legend and returned us to Jackson, a man with flaws. The general's own exacting standards and iron discipline were applied to all who served under him, regardless of their own possible imperfections. This resulted in a great number of conflicts with subordinates (and sometimes superiors), to the detriment of efficiency. Despite his reputation of unbroken success, he was defeated at Kernstown, badly underperformed during the Seven Days, and had his poorly sited defensive lines penetrated at Fredericksburg. He was a slaveowner, granted that he did at least have his slaves taught to read (which was illegal). The notion that the Confederacy would have won had he lived is not supportable (though there are still those who hold to it). And, as Girardi pointed out, Jackson monumentation (as with many other Confederate memorials) has taken a hit in recent years, with removals and relocations.

On behalf of the Round Table, I would like to thank Rob Girardi for this "myth-man" breakdown of the legendary Stonewall Jackson.

Pat McCormick

Speaker lineup

Sept. 1, 2023: Jerry Allen: Old Abe the War Eagle
Oct. 6, 2023: Bruce Allardice: "Loose Lips"--
Military Secrecy During the Civil War
Nov. 3, 2023: Dave Powell Grant at Chattanooga
Dec.1, 2023 Rob Girardi Stonewall Jackson
Jan.5, 2024: Larry Hewitt Combat Photography
Feb. 2, 2024: Dennis Doyle TBA
Mar. 1, 2024: Steve Alban: The Election of 1860
Apr. 5, 2024: Leslie Goddard TBA

May 3, 2024: Jon Sebastian TBA
June 7, 2024: Diana Dretske: The 96th Illinois

Important Announcements!!!!!!

Our Saturday discussion will be on the third Saturday of January, the 20th! The topic will be: Longstreet. With some new books recently published about this Confederate General, he is a worthy topic for our discussion.

We have shortened our Saturday discussion in order to attract more participants. It will go from 10 AM to around 11:30 AM. Please try to get in on this. Pat does a great job, and everyone can jump in on the discussion.

The link works for this meeting, also. Don't miss it.

Once again, a big THANK YOU to Susan Hirsch for taking on the role of Trustee. We all appreciate your effort.



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Appointed Positions

Newsletter Editor Jerry Rodosky

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Upcoming Events

At this time, we are not charging dues for the 2023-2024 year.

Join Zoom Meeting on Friday, Jan. 5, 2024, at 7 PM.

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81433758155?pwd=S1FqVjJ1WmZsTTd1VlJNRcUcLcjlLdz09>