

January 1993

"Stonewall's Eyes: Jed Hotchkiss and Jackson's Valley Campaign"

The 10-week operation to secure the Shenandoah Valley for the Confederacy is now known simply as "Jackson's Valley Campaign." Praised as one of the purest examples of sound military planning and execution, it has been studied in military academies and war colleges around the globe. Jackson has rightly received credit for his devotion to sound strategic concepts, but few of his lieutenants have shared the limelight, despite their exceptional contributions in putting Jackson's plans into effect.

At our January meeting, Bill Miller will introduce us to Jed Hotchkiss, Jackson's topographical engineer, and explain why Hotchkiss was the man most indispensable to Jackson's success in the Valley. Hotchkiss, a school teacher and self-taught engineer, was a man of tremendous energy and intelligence with an intimate knowledge of the Valley. He became the proverbial right man in the right place at the right time, without whom Jackson could not have created his classic campaign. Bill will define the role of a topographical engineer, describe the campaign in detail, and explain why it is considered brilliant and why it succeeded. He will dwell on Hotchkiss's unique role and will discuss why Hotchkiss's personal attributes were as important to Jackson's success as his professional abilities. Don't miss this talk on a fascinating man and an amazing campaign.

Most of you are familiar with Bill Miller, our Round Table's first president. For those of you who haven't had the fortune to hear Bill, you're in for a special evening. Bill Miller grew up in Brookline, Massachusetts, a five-minute walk from the green on which local militiamen mustered before marching to Lexington and Concord. His early interest in local and Revolutionary history changed at age 11, when he visited Gettysburg battlefield and Appomattox Court House. He has been studying the Civil War ever since.

He received a B.A. in English and U.S. history from Villanova University and an M.A. in English from the University of Delaware, where he taught composition. After moving to Virginia from Massachusetts, he taught writing at George Mason University. He is now editor of two publications: *The Color Bearer*, the Journal of the American Blue & Gray Association, and the scholarly journal *Campaign Chronicles, The Peninsula Campaign of 1862*. He is the



founder of the Bull Run Civil War Round Table and spoke to us last year on the subject of his first book *The Training of an Army: Camp Curtin and the North's Civil War*. He will speak to us this month on the subject of his next book, *Mapping for Stonewall: the Civil War Service of Jed Hotchkiss, Map Maker, Scout and Engineer*, which will be published by Elliott & Clark publishing in 1993.

Bearss Escapes Again

The 10 December monthly meeting of our Round table was canceled because of weather conditions, both as they existed that afternoon and as forecasted for that evening. Ed Bearss and BRCWRT president Armando Mancini spoke by phone 2 or 3 times that day and finally decided at 3 p.m. to postpone and reschedule Bearss' presentation. Dr. Mancini hopes to reschedule another date with Mr. Bearss as soon as possible.

McMahon Muses On Civil War Music

Gerald F. "Mac" McMahon

We tend to believe that Federal and Confederate units always had bands in the field. Initially this was true for most regiments and brigades. However, in the summer of 1862 all regimental bands were ordered discontinued and mustered out of the Union Army. After that no bands were enlisted, or paid as such, except brigade bands; and "...if a regiment had a band, it was formed of enlisted men, or company musicians, detailed for that purpose." ("Three Hundred Fighting Regiments, p. 123, in Fox, *Regimental Losses in the Civil War*.)



The Confederate Army, with far more limited resources, did not maintain unit bands as long as did the Union Army.

As the conflict settled down to the brutal battles that were to characterize the next three years, the initial enthusiasm, bravado and colorful uniforms of 1861 became a thing of the past. Both sides needed riflemen, cavalrymen, and artillerymen. Bandsmen, even if given additional duties during the fighting, had become a luxury neither side could afford.

How "Old Pete" Would Have Won the War -- For the Yankees

Bill Miller

I must rise to respectfully contest a recent statement by my esteemed colleague Ralph Swanson. In the last issue of *The Stone Wall*, our learned comrade presented an adroit argument in support of Jeffry Wert's contention that General James Longstreet was the "best commander in either army during the war." Comrade Swanson is obviously well read on the subject, and I shall not pretend to be able to knowledgeably dispute his judgment in favor of "Old Pete"

(though I do feel the commander of the First Corps of the Army of Northern Virginia stood far behind T.J. Jackson as a corps commander, both as a strategist and as a tactician, despite Jackson's shortcomings).



Longstreet



Jackson

I do beg the indulgence of my fellow members, however, to remark upon one of Comrade Swanson's statements--that Longstreet would have made a superb army commander and as such would have achieved more than General Lee did in that position. General Longstreet, whom I admire, apparently did, as Comrade Swanson points out, have a clear understanding of the tactical defensive, but I do not think he had a full enough appreciation of the Confederacy's need to assume at times the strategic offensive. I am not among those who see a conservative defensive strategy as the Confederacy's best plan for victory. Such a policy might have conserved manpower in Lee's army, but to see Lee's army as the Confederacy's greatest hope is, I think, a rather narrow view to which easterners, and Virginians in particular, are unfortunately overly prone. The argument that the Confederacy might have won the war by waiting for the North to tire ignores a number of important facts, chief among them, I think, is the supremacy of the United States Navy. Time, far from being the Confederacy's ally, was a relentless enemy, even when stumbling Federal armies were not.

Furthermore, military considerations completely aside, I believe the effectiveness of the Confederate army in Virginia would have been destroyed by personality clashes had not a strong, decorous and morally unimpeachable man, like Lee, been in command. The many gentlemen of that army would not have consented to serve beneath a man they felt their social or moral inferior. The rampant backbiting and intrigue in the upper reaches of the Army of the Potomac in the first three years of the war would have paled, I think, beside what would have happened in the Confederate army in Virginia under Johnston, Beauregard, Jackson, Longstreet or any other man less tactful or adroit in managing personalities than was Lee. Longstreet in particular, not being a Virginian, was considered a lout by many in that courtly army: he was, in their eyes, a gentleman only by act of Congress. He could never have engendered the respect and devotion Lee enjoyed.

These musings, respectfully submitted to Comrade Swanson and the rest of the membership, are merely my attempts to articulate ideas not fully formed. I trust I will be forgiven if I have rambled too long or too far afield. (I am but an ignorant Yankee still learning the ways and customs of a strange and beautiful land.)

Following Jackson and Hotchkiss to Middletown

Next time you are traveling west on I-66 to the Valley, take a 15-minute detour and follow in the route Jackson took to intercept General N.P. Banks's column as it retreated on the Valley Turnpike to Winchester. After pushing a Federal force out of Front Royal, Jackson continued northward on what is now U.S. 340/522. Take the exit for that road off I-66 and drive northward for less than two miles to the tiny crossroads of Cedarville. Here Jackson turned most of his army westward on a small road. Turn left at the Cedarville crossroads, and you will be following Jackson's route. The following is an excerpt from Bill Miller's forthcoming book on Hotchkiss and describes what happened after Jackson turned west.

"On May 23, Jackson's combined force, now numbering about 17,000, attacked a portion of Banks's force at Front Royal, at the northern end of the Page Valley. The Confederates drove the Federals back in confusion, and the next morning, Banks abandoned Strasburg, five miles west of Front Royal, moving quickly northward toward Winchester. But Banks had waited too long. Jackson was upon him.

Jackson split his force, sending one column directly to Winchester in an effort to beat Banks there. The general led the second, larger portion of his army toward Banks's retreating column, which, he assumed, was to the west on the Valley Turnpike. Jackson sent Hotchkiss ahead of the column with some cavalymen to find Banks. After less than a half a mile, he was fired upon and returned quickly to tell the general he had found Banks. Jackson advanced on the side road, drove off the skirmishers that had fired on Hotchkiss and came to a rise of ground east of Middletown. There, on the Valley Pike as it passed through the town, lay a portion of Banks's column -- a wagon train and cavalry. Jackson deployed some artillery and opened fire.

"As soon as the shell fell among the Yankee cavalry they began to stampede," wrote Hotchkiss, "and as there was a Regt. of some 700 they filled the road for some distance, the companies of the 8th Louisiana [of the Louisiana Tigers] moved promptly forward and just gained the crest of a low ridge, along one side of which the road ran, as the cavalry passed, and poured into them a deadly volley, and such a tumbling of men and horses, as the General afterwards remarked, 'it looked too bad to see so many of them disposed of at once. . . .'"

The Federals were utterly routed and fled in all directions. Jackson moved in his men in quickly to take prisoners and secure the supplies in the abandoned wagons. Hotchkiss was astounded, and delighted, by the appearance of the prisoners, writing that he saw "hundreds of men and richly caparisoned horses, the pride of the Yankee army, its superbly mounted Vermont, N.Y. and Pa. cavalry, that had exultingly [sic] and insolently ridden over our Valley." Before the Confederate guns, he wrote, these brash Yankees had "melted like snow before the sun. . . . I am not vindictive, but I really did not feel sorry to see the horse and his insolent rider laid low. It seemed a just retribution for the evils they had inflicted on an innocent people."

Background on Brawner

The following is given as background material to help us appreciate the historic importance of the Brawner tract. This information is excerpted from a paper written by Dr. Stephen Potter, regional archeologist, NPS, presented at the annual meeting of the Archeological Society of Virginia in October, 1992. More detailed information on the Brawner tract can be found in an NPS funded study prepared by the University of Maryland: *An Archeological Assessment of Brawner*, September 1988, revised December 1989.

The John C. Brawner 300-acre farm, known as "Bachelor's Hall," consisted of a house, some outbuildings and an orchard, which Brawner rented from the owner, Mrs. Augusta Douglas, for an annual fee of \$150 plus two-thirds of the harvest.

Writing about the events of that morning nine years later, Brawner recalled that "some officers came up and asked me why I did not leave as all the rest of the people had left. I told them I was a cripple and could not leave." Handicapped or not, the 64-year old Brawner, his wife, and three daughters fled northward to a neighbor's house later that morning when Brawner matter-of-factly noted "the battle commenced. House was shelled and balls pass[ed] through the house." The artillery and small arms fire that drove the Brawners from their home was merely a skirmish. The real Battle at Brawner Farm began later.

The day after Second Manassas, John Brawner returned to survey the damage to his farm. The house, though riddled by bullets, was still standing and apparently habitable, but the orchard was shot to pieces and the vegetable garden destroyed. Being poor and having no nearby relatives, the Brawners had no choice but to ride out the war at Bachelors' Hall.

Archaeologically, the devastation to the Brawner's meager way of life and the intensity of the combat around their home was very apparent when, 125 years after the battle, the National Park Service, National Capital Region Archeology Program, began preliminary investigations at the Brawner Farm to collect information for the newly acquired property. Officials wanted to determine whether the remodeled 1904-05 structure contained the original antebellum house within it, or was it a later house, rebuilt after the battle?

Excavation units placed along the west, north, and east sides of the extant structure revealed a fairly consistent stratigraphic pattern across the site. The first layer consisted of a mixture of modern domestic trash and topsoil. Beneath this lay a thin lens of Virginia bluestone gravel and hard-packed clay deposited sometime after the battle, apparently to cover the carnage. Underlying this gravel was the antebellum grade upon which the battle was fought. Architectural features associated with this stratum included a set stone walk rubble from an outbuilding probably destroyed during the fighting, and most importantly, the west, north, and east foundation walls of an antebellum house.

This stone foundation measuring 24 feet north-south by 31 feet east-west, is all that remains of Bachelor's Hall. The cut sandstone and fieldstone footers are set on the antebellum grade. There is no cellar beneath the structure. Three chimney footings were found--one on the

west and two on the east side of the house. A fourth chimney footing in the northwest corner was destroyed by extensive tree root activity and use of the stone in later rebuilding.

Two stone piers were discovered along the north foundation wall. The interior portions of the piers probably served as supports for floor joists, while the exterior portions may have acted as supports for porch columns. These antebellum architectural features are indicative of a two-story house with a four-room floor plan. The size and symmetry of the structure are in keeping with Georgian style prevalent in the Manassas area during the first quarter of the nineteenth century when the house was built. It also reflects the type of house that would be referred to as a "hall."

The archeological record clearly indicates that Bachelor's Hall was consolidated after the Battle of Second Manassas. This revised floorplan, one-third smaller than the original structure, utilized the original south foundation wall and a portion of the east wall. The consolidation and reconstruction is also reflected in the 1868 Prince William County Land Tax Records. Antebellum architectural elements present in the east-west wing of the current structure may be affiliated with Bachelor's Hall or may have been salvaged from other damaged or abandoned antebellum structures. Most likely, the post-war house was a story-and-a-half with two chimneys at each end.

Evidence of the intense fighting in the Brawner yard consisted of over 100 battle-related artifacts--55 found in situ. Among the militaria is a Model 1816 Bayonet, almost certainly dropped by a Virginian from Colonel Alexander Taliaferro's regiments who engaged the 19th Indiana around Bachelor's Hall.

If anyone would like to contribute further background information about the Brawner Tract or other local sites, we would be happy to print it in *The Stone Wall*.

Swanson Sweeps Sketch Contest

Ralph Swanson won a book for most correctly identifying the sketches in last month's newsletter. Swanson correctly pegged the top sketch as a long column of Federal troops and wagon trains crossing the Rapidan River on pontoon bridges at Germanna Ford on 5 May 1864, heading east toward the Wilderness. The lower sketch was a little more difficult, and nobody got it exactly right. It's a drawing of Sherman's soldiers torching a cartload of New York newspapers containing articles condemning the generous peace terms their general had given Johnston's confederates. One officer said, "...I witnessed the scene with keener satisfaction than I had ever felt over the destruction of any property since the day we left Atlanta."

Coming Events

Feb. 13-14 (703) 236-7835 or 236-7542	"Antique Arms and Civil War Shows"	Roanoke, VA
March 13 (814) 238-3001	"Civil War Leadership Seminar"	State College, PA
March 27-28 (703) 373-1672	"Preserving VA's Civil War Heritage"	Fredricksburg, VA

In History...

101 years ago this month, James D. Cook died at approximately 50 years of age in 1892. His letter, with commentary, are provided by G. F. "Mac" McMahon

We know a great deal about camp living conditions, supply services, the terror of close combat, the boredom and loneliness of camp life, patriotism, hopes and ambitions for postwar peace and quiet, and many other topics, because a great many common soldiers put their thoughts down in writing. Their letters and diary entries are often more valuable than the detailed and frequently verbose accounts dictated or penned by ranking officers of the period.

The fact that so many accounts were kept, preserved and passed on to descendants is remarkable. Many collections lay forgotten in boxes and trunks for generations until someone with a historian's inquisitiveness or a flair for analysis and writing put them into print for our benefit.

Rolland J. Gladieux gathered a number of accounts of one Union organization and published them as *Battery H, 1st Ohio Light Artillery in Virginia, 1864-1865*, a pamphlet published at Kenmore, NY in 1982.

Some of the letters in the Battery H collection were written by James D. Cook to his brother William D. Cook, an artilleryman on duty with the Army of the Tennessee. James wrote of brotherly love, of honorable service, of his disgust for "sneaking, cowardly --" who stayed at home, of boyhood events in Cleveland, his hopes "for good times again," and his admiration for General Grant: "I think he is a second Washington."



One letter by James was particularly long and covered a wide variety of topics. Excerpts from that letter appear on the next page.

Army of the Potomac
Camp before Petersburg, VA
Monday, September 26th, 1864

Dear Brother,

Last Saturday morning, at break of day, we fired a salute of 100 guns along this part of the lines in honor of General Sheridan's victory in the Shenandoah Valley. Our Battery took part in the firing, and each gun pointed towards the Rebel works, and each gun carried our compliments and best respects to the Rebels in the shape of a shell. That's the way we fire a salute here. The Rebels seemed to understand the cause of the firing, but they did not return it very rapidly.

We all regret the killing of General Russell in the valley. He was a good and brave General, as he proved himself in May and June in the battles of Spotsylvania Court House and Cold Harbor.

I don't think we will get paid again before the 1st of January (note that the letter was written in September). When you get paid, Billy, I wish you would get your picture taken in good style and in a good case, and send it to me. Get it taken standing up with your hat off and in full artillery uniforms, with your artillery jacket on, buttoned up, in good style, and have a full front view taken, not a side view. I have cash enough to get mine taken, and I am going to try and get leave to go to City Point tomorrow and get mine taken in full uniform and have it ready to send you next time I write.

I am in good health, but whenever I do any hard work, such as heavy policing, lifting, or carrying anything heavy, it gives me a severe pain in the side and back. You know, Billy, while I was at Jackson, I was injured in the back by being thrown from a horse. I will never get over it entirely, but there ain't no use in running to the doctors every time a fellow is troubled with a little pain, beside we have got the meanest fool of a doctor in this brigade that I ever saw. I have not been to him in over six weeks, though I have been quite unwell at times, and continued to do my full duty rather than go near him. I never go to him at all unless I want some slats or a physic of some kind.

They are giving us small rations now. We get cod fish and mackerel instead of so much pork and beef. We drew three days rations at a time, and two days rations of soft bread and one of hard tack. Sometimes we get good hard bread, but most of the hard bread we get is wormy and unfit to eat. I split a good fresh looking hard tack open with my pen knife and found 8 to 10 bugs and worms in the middle of it, of three different kinds. There was one bug in it with wings, that flew away as soon as he could, and two bugs without wings, and several good sized white worms, all alive and crawling. Every piece in the box was more or less wormy and buggy. This is a fact, and can be fully proven, and this is the kind of hard bread we have had for the last two months, except once in a while we get some that is good, and half the time our soft bread is mouldy and unfit to eat.

Your brother and friend,
James D. Cook

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RENEW YOUR

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Happy New Year

Membership



BULL RUN CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

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Dues are \$15 per calendar year (January 1 to December 31) for an individual membership and \$25 per year for a family membership. Checks should be made payable to the Bull Run Civil War Round Table and handed to either the treasurer or the president -- or you may mail this form and your check to:

The Bull Run Civil War Round Table • P.O. Box 951 • Manassas, VA 22111

"Stonewall's Eyes"

Stonewall Jackson and Jed Hotchkiss
in the
1862 Shenandoah Valley Campaign

A lecture
delivered by

William J. Miller

Author of
Mapping for Stonewall:
The Civil War Service
of Jed Hotchkiss
Map Maker, Scout and Engineer

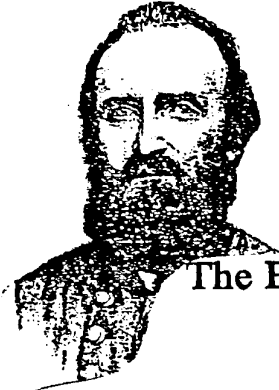
Presented by

The Bull Run Civil War Round Table

Thursday January 14, 1993

7:30 pm

at Manassas National Battlefield Park



★ Admission is free ★

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