

THE STONE WALL

April 1995

BALL'S BLUFF October 21, 1861

Gen. George McClellan learned that Gen. Joe Johnston was preparing to evacuate Leesburg. Brig. Gen. Charles P. Stone investigated.

"The fight across the river was their opportunity to prove their critics wrong. Nursery soldiers, one newspaper had called them; wonderfully trained and beautifully drilled, but much too precious to be dirtied in battle. Yet tonight the despised nursery soldiers would fight. Tonight the Army of the Potomac would carry fire and steel to a rebel encampment and if all went well they would march on to occupy the town of Leesburg, which lay two miles beyond the enemy camp."

Bernard Cornwell, *Copperhead*

The fight didn't go well for the Yankees. The Confederate brigade pushed the Yankees into a small area on steep Ball's Bluff. Shelby Foote wrote that it reminded the Mississippians of a turkey shoot. The Confederates charged, the Yankees retreated. Over the edge of the bluff. Into the Potomac.

The battle's preeminent historian, Kim Holien, describes this early Confederate victory at the April round table.

KIM HOLIEN

*Thursday, Apr. 13, 1995, 7:30 p.m.
Manassas National Battlefield Park
Visitor Center*

**BULL RUN CIVIL WAR
ROUND TABLE**
P. O. Box 196
Centreville, VA 22020

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THOUGHTS of our Vice President

I'd like to take this opportunity to inform you of the goings-on of our organization to date. I hope that all of our members have renewed by this time. For all the stragglers, there is still time to reenlist to guarantee that you will continue to hear absorbing presentations, receive our newsletters, win books at our raffles, and participate in free tour opportunities. Speaking of the latter, Armando Mancini took a group out to the Bristoe Campaign. We have another opportunity in early May with our Chancellorsville tour. Information for this trip is provided in this newsletter.

One of my duties is to schedule speakers for 1996. I've procrastinated long enough and am ready to contact potential presenters, but I need your help. If you know of an effective speaker living in the area, or are interested in a Civil War-related topic that we have not covered, please let me know at our meeting or call me at 406-4933.

In a couple of months, a segment of our executive committee will nominate our 1995-1996 officers. The new administration will be voted for in August and will take charge in September. If anyone is interested in taking a more active role in the Round Table, or want information on certain positions or committees, please contact me at the above number. We warmly welcome any voluntary help.

I'm looking forward to Kim Holien's presentation on Ball's Bluff as he is the expert of that battle. Jim Burgess did a fantastic job on his artillery presentation last month. It seems to me that we have had one heckuva year in garnering great speakers. I'll have my work cut out for me to maintain this high standard for next year's schedule. With your ideas, I have no doubt this can be achieved.

I am most respectfully your obedient servant, *Gary Ecelbarger*

MARCHING ORDERS

Forward to CHANCELLORSVILLE

Saturday, May 13

The Bull Run Civil War Round Table continues its busy touring season by embarking on the Chancellorsville Campaign. The tour of one of the most fascinating battlefields in the National Park System will be guided by members of the Round Table, a hallmark of our organization.

Highlights

ELY'S FORD: Hooker steals a march on Robert E. Lee

CHANCELLOR HOUSE: Description of the crossroads and the Wilderness

McGEE HOUSE: First day's action, May 1, 1863

LEE-JACKSON BIVOUAC SITE: An audacious plan is formulated

CATHARINE FURNACE SITE: Sickles attacks Jackson's tail; implications

JACKSON'S FLANK MARCH: Stonewall leads the way

BROCK ROAD/ORANGE TURNPIKE: Jackson rolls up the 11th Union Corps

VISITOR CENTER: Jackson is wounded

HAZEL GROVE: Confederate artillery dominance

FAIRVIEW AREA/BERRY-PAXTON DRIVE: The advent of trench warfare, third day's fight

BULLOCH/ELY'S FORD ROAD INTERSECTION: Hooker's final line; Lee's victory

Time of departure: 8 a.m. at the Dogan's Ridge parking lot at Manassas Battlefield Park (Rt. 234, one half mile north of the Stone House intersection).

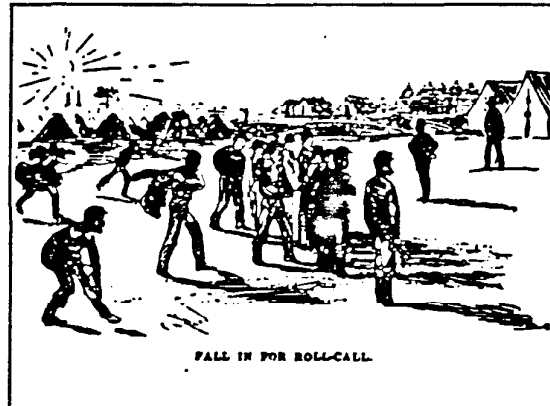
Cost: Free. Members are encouraged to reimburse the driver of carpools for the gasoline.

Rations: Bring a picnic. We'll break for lunch at the visitor center.

Sign up: Two sheets will be available at the April and May meetings. One is for volunteer tour guides; the other for members who wish to attend.

Rain date: A driving rainstorm will postpone the tour until the following Saturday, May 20.

OFFICIAL REPORTS



BRISTOE STATION TOUR

The temperature was cool and the wind was blowing, but the sunshine and clear skies made our Bristoe Campaign self-guided tour on March 25 a very enjoyable outing for the 13 participants. We started the tour from Dogan Ridge, Manassas Battlefield, Park at 9:45 a.m., 45 minutes late.

We did the tour in two segments. The first segment included the Union withdrawal route that followed mostly along the Orange-Alexandria railroad from the Rapidan River to Centreville Heights and the second segment included the Confederate pursuit route from Orange to Bristoe Station.

We followed Route 28 southward (close to the railroad) with brief stops for presentations near Milford, Catlett's Station, Rappahannock Station, Mt. Pony and the very top of Clark Mountain, where the view of the battlefield was truly spectacular, as it must have been for Gen. Lee and his generals on Oct. 3, 1863.

The northward segment included stops at James City (Leon), the first engagement of the campaign; a drive-by stop at the location where the Wallach house (Meade's headquarters) once stood; Fleetwood Hill (Brandy Station), the location of an 11,000 man cavalry battle on Oct. 11, 1863; Jeffersonton/Fauquier White Sulphur Springs on the Rappahannock; and a quick stop at Warrenton in front of Mosby's house.

OFFICIAL REPORTS

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At that point, it was after 4 p.m., and some of our guides had other schedules to meet, so we decided to defer the last two stations, Auburn and Bristoe, to a later date.

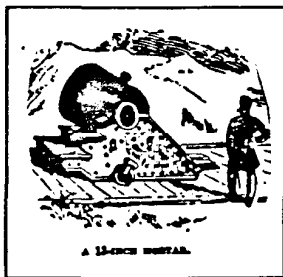
We wish to thank our tour guides, Logan and Miller, and our members who joined actively in our discussions.

Our thanks are also extended to those property owners who allowed us to use their property and private driveways for our vehicles. These include: Mr. Moore (Clark Mt.); Mr. and Mrs. Pumpery (Leon); Mr. and Mrs. Mitchell (Brandy); and the Rev. Braylo (Baptist Church-Jeffersonton). They are all new friends of our Round Table, and understand and support what we do.

Unfortunately, there are others of opposite views. Mr. and Mrs. Gyory, who now have a home where the Wallach house once was, refused to have anything to do with us, hence the reason for only a drive-by at that site. Also, Mrs. Wemyss, owns Castle Murry in Casanova where Gen. Warren and his staff stayed the evening and night of Oct. 13, 1863. She did not even acknowledge receiving several of our written inquiries asking for permission for us to drive into her property, just to see the castle for a minute or two. Well, at least we have current photographs of the structure, and you can see them at the April meeting.

Our next self-guided tour is Chancellorsville, May 13. Following that, we'll go to Fisher's Hill, June 17.

Armando Mancini
Field Trip Chairman



REGROUP FOR BRISTOE

The completion of the Bristoe Station tour is scheduled for Sunday, April 23, 1-4 p.m.

This segment will include stations A and B, covering the action of Oct. 14, 1863, the last day of the campaign.

We will meet at the picnic grounds on Dogan Ridge, Manassas Battlefield. If you own a van, you are encouraged to drive.

BOOK REVIEW



STONEWALL JACKSON'S ROMNEY CAMPAIGN

Jan. 1 - Feb. 20, 1862

by Thomas M. Rankin

Reviewer: Gary Ecelbarger

"Next came the Romney Campaign (January 1862), which on account of the extreme cold and the snow and the rain was simply terrible - ... Colonel G. F. R. Henderson, his accomplished biographer, labors to prove the campaign a success on the whole. But it would not require one to have taken part in that expedition to be convinced that it was far from being a success. He has only to read the official reports to be forced to admit that it was a failure."

William Poague, Gunner with Stonewall

Author Thomas Rankin extensively uses those official reports mentioned by Lt. Col. Poague to weave together a comprehensive description of what the Southerners called "The Bath and Romney Trip." His new book, published by H. E. Howard in 1994, adds a valuable piece to that publisher's Virginia Campaign series, and illustrates the difficulties that Gen. Thomas J. "Stonewall" Jackson encountered on his first major campaign as an independent commander.

Rankin's informative style descriptively builds the genesis of Jackson's Valley District and highlights the inherent difficulties of placing Gen. William Loring and his Army of the Northwest under Stonewall's command. The author meticulously (perhaps too much so) fills the first 80 pages of his 150-page narrative with pre-campaign information to set the stage for the New Year's march toward Bath (modern-day Berkeley Springs, W. Va.), Va., then details the subsequent one-month action that accomplished little, save for the two-week occupation of Romney at the cost of over 1,000 sick soldiers, scores of dead ones, and court-martial charges levelled by Stonewall against Loring and one of his subordinates.

The book succeeds in showing the reader how much the combination of lousy weather and dissatisfied soldiers can unravel a commander's plan better than an adversary could ever hope to accomplish. Rankin also successfully illustrates how the Virginia militia was a great

BOOK REVIEW

Continued from page 6

detriment to Jackson, failing him on three separate occasions during the first two months of 1862. The author extensively resources Volumes 5 and 51 of the Official Records (OR), two volumes of that series that receive little notice, to tell a story that has received too little attention during this period of heightened interest in the Civil War.

Unfortunately, the author relies too much on those two sources. A case in point can be seen in the author's final chapter where he cites the official records as the lone source for all but one of his 41 footnotes. Paraphrasing the OR does little to add to the Civil War literature. Only nine manuscript sources are utilized while approximately 70 published sources fill the remainder of the bibliography. Rankin understandably tells his story from the Confederate perspective, but unwisely avoids the vast Union source material available in describing the campaign. The expected result is historical errors generated from using indirect sources to explain Federal strength and deployment. For example, the author tells us that the 110th Pennsylvania "crossed the Potomac and headed for Bath" on Jan. 3, citing the lone Union regimental history used in the book, Charles Clark's history of the 39th Illinois. That Pennsylvania regiment never crossed the Potomac that day because they were caught up in an intra-regimental rock war near Hagerstown.

Rankin could have better served his readers by using more unpublished Southern and Northern material to color his narrative. Surprisingly, he acknowledges the staff at the Library of Congress in aiding his research. That depository holds the unpublished manuscript material of Jed Hotchkiss, Gen. Banks, and Gen. Lander, all of which contain valuable material pertaining to the Bath-Romney campaign. These gold mines were left untapped. The presence of a mere two maps also handicap the effectiveness of this work.

To be fair, this author accomplished much to provide us with the most comprehensive literary work on Jackson's Romney campaign to date. Rankin's book surpasses Dabney's and Henderson's treatment of the expedition for the reasons which Poague describes above. For this achievement, this book must now be considered the definitive work on that particular campaign, but the author's oversights have left the door open for a more diligent researcher to claim that title.

STONEWALL JACKSON'S ROMNEY CAMPAIGN, Jan. 1 - Feb. 20, 1862. By Thomas M. Rankin. H. E. Howard, 1994.

Civil War
**ENCAMPMENT
 &
 FIELD HOSPITAL**

April 29 & 30, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

Ben Lomond Manor House
 10311 Sudley Manor Drive, Manassas

Donation: \$2
 For information, call 361-7275, ext. 280

PRESERVATION CORNER

Civil War Heritage Project

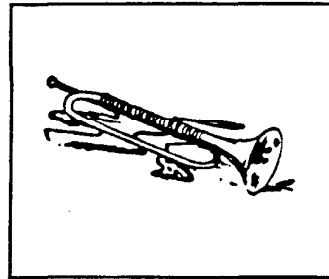
Another organization deeply concerned about our Civil War heritage is VFW Post 8489, "Blue and Gray", in Fairfax Station. Recently this post approved the funds to conduct an aerial photo mission that cover, inter alia, historic sites in the vicinity of the old Orange and Alexandria Railroad (now the Norfolk Southern) from Fairfax Station west to near Manassas Junction, almost the entire Union Mills area, and other sites.

The aerial photo mission was flown March 20. The quality of the photographs is superb. These, coupled with those taken at ground level by VFW Post 8469 and BRCWRT members will make an outstanding slide presentation.

Many of the sites photographed are threatened by development. For example, a 962-acre tract in Fairfax County bound on the west by Bull Run, on the north by Compton Rd., on the east by a line running generally north-south along a ridge to the east of the old Ivakotz Farm, and on the south by the Norfolk Southern Railroad tracks. Already 232 acres have been sold off for the construction of a golf course to be located south of Compton Road and west of Union Mill Road. Also marked for destruction are one well-defined multi-company defensive position and a section of well-preserved breastworks, and a good bit of what is termed "Camp Measles."

The remaining acreage, divided into five parcels, is for sale. Current plans are to carve out numerous 2-to-7 acre plots on the high ground, located within the remaining 730 acres. Low-lying land in this area will remain undeveloped "green space."

John McAnaw



TOURS

Recently, I spoke with Pete Brown of History America Tours about his organization's 1995 tours and participating historians, which include Ed Bearss, Brian Wills, William C. Davis, Richard McMurry, and William H. Leckie. Mr. Brown stated he will give the BRCWRT a donation for every member who signs up and pays for one of his tours. This money would be used to support battlefield preservation efforts.

Upcoming History America Tours include:

RIDING WITH FORREST, Sept. 26-Oct. 1 with Ed Bearss, special guest Brian S. Wills.

THE CIVIL WAR IN THE SOUTHEAST ALONG THE INTRACOASTAL WATERWAY, Nov. 25-Dec. 2 with Richard McMurry.

CIVIL WAR CRUISE ON MISSISSIPPI QUEEN, CHATTANOOGA TO NASHVILLE, Aug. 16-24 with Richard McMurry.

CIVIL WAR CRUISE ON MISSISSIPPI QUEEN, NEW ORLEANS TO MEMPHIS, Sept. 28-Oct. 6 with Richard McMurry.

CAMPAIGNS IN KENTUCKY, May 25-30 with Ed Bearss.

I have a limited supply of brochures on each of the tours and will bring them to the April meeting.

For additional information, contact: History America TOURS, Division of Tailored Tours, P.O. Box 797687, Dallas, TX 75739. Telephone: (800) 628-8542.

FROM THE RANKS

A Soldier's Last Letter to His Wife

Elisha Franklin "Bull Paxton" was promoted brigadier general and given command of the Stonewall Brigade late in 1862. Paxton began his career as a lieutenant of the 5th Virginia. He rose through the ranks of the 27th Virginia and eventually lead that brigade at the Battle of Chancellorsville, where he was killed during the action of May 3, 1863. Indicating a premonition of his death, Paxton wrote this poignant letter to his wife.

No date. first page of letter being lost.
It was probably Apr. 27, 1863

We had snow here on Saturday night which continued yesterday morning and is now about gone. The roads are now in pretty good condition, and if the enemy wish to make the attack, there is, I think, no reason now for deferring it on account of the roads. But, darling, there is no telling when it will be. The future, ever a mystery, is more mysterious now than ever before. Our destiny is in the hands of God, infinite in his justice, goodness and mercy; and I feel that in such time as he may appoint he will give us the blessings of independence and peace. We are a wicked people and the chastisement which we have suffered has not humbled and improved us as it ought. We have a just cause, but we do not deserve success if those who are here spend this time in blasphemy and wickedness, and those who are at home devote their energies into avarice and extortion. Fasting and prayer by such a people is blasphemy, and, if answered at all, will be by an infliction of God's wrath, not in a dispensation of his mercy.

The future, as you say, darling, is dark enough. Though sound in health and strength, I feel that life to many of us hangs upon a slender thread. Whenever God wills it that mine pass from me, I feel that I can say in calm resignation, "Into thy hands I commend my spirit." In this feeling I am prepared to go forward in the discharge of my duty, striving to make every act and thought of my life conform to his law, and trusting with implicit faith in the salvation promised through Christ. How I wish that I were better than I feel that I am; that when I close my eyes to-night, I

FROM THE RANKS

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might feel certain that every thought, act and feeling of tomorrow would have its motive in love for God and its object in his glory! Well, so it is. Why is it we cannot feel sure that the sins of the past are never to be repeated? May God give me strength to be what I ought to be - to do what I ought to do! And now, darling, good-bye. When we meet again, I hope you will have a better husband - that your prayer and mine may be answered.

Love,
Frank

COMING UP

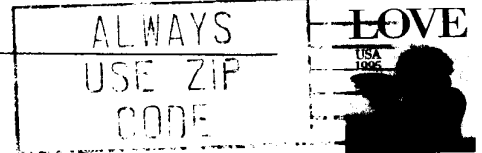
Ed Bearss

discusses

NATHAN BEDFORD FORREST

May 9

Bull Run Civil War Round Table
P.O. Box 196
Centreville, VA 22020



LAST CALL

Have you sent your membership enlistment papers in?

The membership roster will be printed in the April newsletter.