



Maj. Gen. Joseph Wheeler Camp #863, Conyers, Ga.

GEN. JOE'S DISPATCH



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Coming Events

May 20 - 22, 2011 - **147th Anniversary of the "Battle of Resaca**, Resaca, Georgia

July 14 - 16, 2011 - **2011 SCV Reunion**, Montgomery, Alabama

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Georgia Marks 150th Secession Anniversary

By: Carlton Fletcher / Albany Herald



JANUARY 19, 1861 - On this date 150 years ago, the state of Georgia — following the lead of South Carolina, Mississippi, Florida and Alabama — signed an ordinance of secession by which it officially declared itself a free and independent state.

The action, taken by the Georgia Legislature because, as they wrote at the time, "The rulers whom the North offers us ... give sanctuary to thieves and incendiaries who assail it to the whole extent of their power ...; because their avowed purpose is to subvert our society and subject us not only to the loss of property but the destruction of ourselves, our wives and our children, and the desolation of our homes, our altars and our firesides," is one of the precursors to the American Civil War, which started slightly less than four months later, on April 12, 1861, at Fort Sumter in South Carolina.

In the century and a half since Georgia's secession, historians have argued the causes and effects of the Civil War and the events that led to the bloody conflict that claimed 620,000 American lives. And while all agree that the death and destruction were staggering blows to the still-young nation, arguments persist to this day over the causes of the devastating confrontation.

"There are some who say the Civil War was all about slav-

ery, and there are others who say it was all about states' rights," said Tom Hiter, a retired professor who now serves as national chief of heritage defense for the Sons of Confederate Veterans organization. "It's just not that simple. There are huge, complicated factors that led to what was essentially the northern states' invasion of the South.

"Robert E. Lee said, 'Emancipation was a result of the war, not a cause,' and from my studies I've found that to be as accurate an assessment as there is. The North did not fight to free the slaves, and the South did not fight to keep the institution of slavery. It's much more complicated than that."

TRUTH 'IN MIDDLE'

South Carolina's Legislature passed that state's ordinance of secession Dec. 20, 1860, and Mississippi, Florida, Alabama, Georgia and Louisiana each followed suit during the next month. On Feb. 1 Texas became the seventh, and last, state to secede from the union before the onset of the war, but Virginia, Arkansas, North Carolina, Tennessee, Missouri and Kentucky joined them before 1861 had ended.

For four years, until April 9, 1865, the two sides fought fiercely before Lee's inevitable surrender to Gen. Ulysses S. Grant at Appomattox, Va.

And while that famous meeting ended the fighting and preserved

the American Union, bitter rhetoric over that period of this country's history persists to this day.

"Like a bad marriage in which two incompatible individuals had been at odds and arguing for years, the South wanted a divorce," James King, commander of the local SCV camp, said. "The South was tired of the abuse.

"One can take certain statements, facts and quotes and present a perspective that the war and secession were totally over slavery, and one can take other statements, facts and quotes and present a perspective that slavery had nothing to do with the war and secession. The truth is somewhere in the middle."

The Sons of Confederate Veterans was organized in Richmond, Va., in 1896 as a means of preserving the heritage of Southern soldiers who fought during the Civil War. Its members say they constantly battle a stigma imposed by detractors who claim the organization perpetuates racial divide.

"It's like two boys on a playground: If one calls the other names, he's going to respond," Dan Coleman, a spokesman for the Georgia SCV division, said. "Unfortunately, there are people out there who profit from divisiveness, and race is an easy enough topic to stir people's passions.

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Our Commanders Comments



By: Commander Elect J. H. Underwood



As I began this months newsletter my thoughts and prayers were directed toward Pam New, 2Lt. Cmdr. Jerry New's wife, whom had just gone through brain surgery at Northside Hospital. At that time I did not know her condition but then yesterday (2/25) I got this e-mail from Jerry;

"Hey Commander: Everything went very well through out the surgery Pam is home I brought her home today Fri. @5:00pm she is resting with a good bit of pain but able to control it with pain meds. I would like to Thank everyone for all the Thoughts & Prayers and concern!! Deeply Appreciated!!!! Prayer can change things. THANKS TO ALL & Praise to God. Amen!!"
Keep up the prayers, they are working!

On a lighter note I am very pleased to announce that our own Brigade Commander Philip Autrey has agreed to address the Camp at our March 8th meeting. I ask all members that can to please be there to welcome Commander Autrey and show him how much we appreciate his visit. I am sure what ever the Commander has to say will be interesting and there will be time for your questions after his address.

In my comments last month I mentioned that March would be a good time to continue the clean-up and restoration of the Middlebrooks cemetery. I hope we can do this on Saturday, March 12th.

Spring is coming on fast and I fear the longer we wait the more difficult it will be. The southwest end of the cemetery needs our attention the most. The tree that the utility company left laying in the cemetery needs to be removed. It is entangled with vines that are dead or dormant and will be

easier to remove now than when they start new growth.

We should also take this opportunity to go over the rest of the cemetery with a mower or weed eaters and perhaps spray round-up on any new growth on the rock wall

I will go by the Middlebrooks cemetery on Sunday or Monday before the meeting and will have up to date knowledge of what we will need to plan our work day.

Please plan to be at the cemetery around 8:00 am on Saturday, March 12th weather permitting. I don't anticipate working much past noon but I think we can accomplish our goal by then if we have enough participants.

Thanks in advance for your help and don't forget the meeting Tuesday, March 8th at 7:30 pm. I look forward to seeing you there and hearing what our 13th Brigade Commander has to say. For the cause; Your Commander.



Georgia Marks 150th Secession Anniversary



By: Carlton Fletcher; Albany Herald (Continued from Page 1)

"The main problem is with our education system. Until they go back and teach the true history of the Civil War rather than the revised history, there will be this perception that the 'benevolent North' fought to free suffering slaves and the South fought to keep them. And that's just not true. It's like Jefferson Davis said: 'Everything's negotiable but independence.' That's a Southern perspective that's not discussed."

OBSERVANCE OPPOSITION

Georgians will commemorate the sesquicentennial of the state's secession today in Milledgeville, the former state capital, with a Georgia SCV-sponsored re-enactment of speeches made by Alexander Stephens, Robert Toombs, Thomas Cobb, Eugenius Nisbett and Hershel Johnson during the state's 1861 convention. And while Coleman said he's heard "no adverse feedback" associated with the event, that hasn't been the case in other such celebrations.

The NAACP in South Carolina called for

a protest of that state's "Secession Ball" held Dec. 20.

"The Sons of Confederate Veterans have become, by default, the focal point of people who oppose any celebration of Southern heritage," Hiter, who resides in western Kentucky, said. "And things have really picked up in the last five or six months as we've started talking about the sesquicentennial. There was a lot of noise about the (removal of the Confederate battle emblem from) state flags in Georgia, Mississippi and South Carolina four or five years ago, but things quieted down.

"Now, as we celebrate an important date in our heritage, people who would attack our efforts see what we're doing as waving a red flag in front of them. That's not what we're about; this is no red flag. But the national media now seem to equate our group and the South in general with the Ku Klux Klan, and it puts us in an uncomfortable position."

Jimmy Shirley, the commander of a West Palm Beach SCV camp in south Florida who writes for a biweekly publication there, said

he's come under personal attack for his affiliation with the SCV and, simply, for his Southernness.

"A young lady from New York made comments about me recently, and she talked about me being from the 'dirty South' and my lack of knowledge associated with my 'Rebel-ness,'" Shirley said. "There seems to be a growing prejudice against the South associated with the Civil War, and groups like (the SCV) who try to point out errors passed off as historical fact are accused of presenting 'revisionist history.'

"But it's like kids working on a construction job. Plans get revised; there's nothing wrong with revision. The more we learn about the past, the more we need revision. There's this Yankee frame of mind where northerners won't listen to new historical data. You tell a Yankee the Civil War was not just about slavery, and they'll tell you you're wrong.

We could clear up a lot of problems (between Northerners and Southerners) in three little words: 'Yankee go home.'"



Alternative to U.S. National Archives



By: *Compatriot Gene Wade*



Compatriots:

Do you get disgusted with paying \$25. to the National Archives for each and every copy of a service

record you request for your Confederate ancestor? And then you are not really sure that you have the right record for the right person and you suspect there may be multiple files depending on whether your ancestor was consistent in using the same name and initials all the time. And if he decided that riding a horse (cavalry) was more desirable than walking (Infantry) and changed units to accommodate his changing career goals, more service records were created for which the National Archives will eagerly charge you still another \$25. You can possibly go to the Federal Archives branch at Morrow, GA to view relevant microfilms but that is time consuming and not real user friendly.

There is now a desirable option called Footnote.com. Footnote.com has for the last few years been digitizing many historical records to include Confederate service records previously only obtainable from the National Archives. Footnote.com has now digitized to their website over 95% of Civil War records.

Especially used in conjunction with the Civil War Soldiers and Sailors System (CWSS) (www.itd.nps.gov/cwss), I have personally found Footnote.com to be invaluable. Many of my ancestors, and probably yours, have multiple service records and I can't stress enough how important it is to scan other service records which could be relevant to what you want.

For me, Footnote.com is a winner. The National Archives Civil War Soldiers and Sailors system (CWSS) is free but it shows little beyond name, rank and unit. Footnote.com shows the exact same record for which the National Archives charges \$25. Yes, Footnote.com is a subscription service. It costs \$11.95 per month, or \$79.95 per

year. There may be a free trial period. You are allowed to access all the records you want. Footnote.com also allows you access to many other historical records, maps and documents. Surf the site and see if you think it worthwhile.

It was mentioned to me by a camp member that the annual discounted rate of \$49.95 is available through the SCV. All one has to do is go to the SCV general headquarters page, scroll down to the Footnote ad and then click on the "search for your Confederate ancestors" bar. The usual rate is \$79.95.

If you choose not to subscribe but still wish to obtain the records of some of your ancestors, let me know and I will obtain a reasonable number of records for you.

Compatriot Gene Wade



Confederates buried at Covington and Oxford



By: *Compatriot Gene Wade*



As some camp members know, I have embarked on a mission to better identify the Confederate soldiers buried in the Confederate section of the Covington City Cemetery and the Confederate Soldier Cemetery on the Emory-Oxford College campus at Oxford. I have made much progress but I have a long way to go. We have periodic memorial services honoring those brave soldiers who once fought for

the Confederacy but we actually know little about the individual soldier, where they came from, the battles they fought or how they died.

Until now, gathering information on these soldiers would have been next to impossible but now, thanks to the internet, unit histories, family genealogy web sites, census records and other web sites, information is now more readily available. This is not to say that information on these soldiers is easily accessible but at least more information is available than in the past. It is taking much tedious digging but I am gathering substantial interesting information that I hope will

be published in future newsletters. I sincerely believe our Confederate ancestors deserve to be recognized.

I ask for assistance from camp members and our camp friends. I am seeking histories and perhaps photographs of both of these cemeteries from the past. Do you have photographs from an earlier era? Verbal accounts of observances? Histories? I would love to have them for possible inclusion in a brochure or pamphlet for the camp. Perhaps your own personal remembrances of these cemeteries. Please e-mail or snail-mail this information to me or let me know where I can find it.

Compatriot Gene Wade

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9 Civil War Parks Join For A Junior Historian Program



From: Feb. 2011 issue of "Civil War News"

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Nine Southeast national Civil War parks have joined in a Junior Civil War Historian program to encourage young visitors and their families to visit places where the Civil War unfolded and to explore how the war impacted people's lives and how it affects people today.



Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park

Children 6 and older can earn a special Junior Civil War Historian patch by completing the Junior Ranger programs at three participating parks and/or completing special online activities.

As they earn their patches students will consider such questions as why people fought, what it was like to be in the middle of a battle, how civilians coped

and how enslaved people seized opportunities to gain and sometimes fight for freedom.

There are two ways to become a Junior Civil War Historian. The first option is to become a Junior Ranger at three participating parks and turn in the activity card or Junior Ranger program booklets to receive the patch.

The second way is do online activity at www.nps.gov/stri/forkids/jcwhonline.htm.

The participating Civil War parks are: Andersonville National Historic Site, Andersonville, Ga.; Chickamauga & Chattanooga National Military Park, Fort Oglethorpe, Ga.; Fort Donelson National Battlefield, Dover, Tenn.; Fort Pulaski National Monument, Savannah, Ga.; Fort Sumter National Monument, Charleston, S.C.; Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park, Kennesaw, Ga.; Shiloh National Military Park, Shiloh, Tenn.; Stones River National Battlefield, Murfreesboro, Tenn.; and Vicksburg National Military Park, Vicksburg, Miss.