

The Outpost

The Newsletter of the Salt Creek Civil War Roundtable
Vol. XLXV1 No. 6 February 2011



438th Regular Meeting

DATE:	Friday, February 18, 2011
PLACE:	Fairview Village Downers Grove, IL 60532
TIME:	8:00 p.m.
SPEAKER:	Michael Weeks
TOPIC:	"The Complete Civil War Round Trip Guide"

"There is no better way to learn than through experience. It is easy to read about the Civil War--there have been thousands of books dedicated to its battles, its personalities, its politics, and its impact on history. But none of these books (including this one) can take the place of being there, seeing the landscape, walking the fields, and communing with the ghosts of the people who made the war a defining moment in America's history." Anyone can read about a battle, review maps and troop movements, but when you are able to stand on the actual site you can better understand the tactics and strategies.

These are the opening lines of "The Complete Civil War Road Trip Guide". This book is designed to get you to places that will help you experience the Civil War in a way no history book can.

Michael Weeks is an amateur historian with a passion for the road. He has driven tens of thousands of miles across America in search of the roots of U.S. history.

Michael lives in the South Loop area of Chicago with his wife, Charlotte. Although he is the author of a comprehensive road trip guide, ironically, he does not own a car. You can follow him and contact him on Twitter @weeks312.

JANUARY MEETING BY RICK BENSON

On Friday January 21, 2011 Roger Bohn provided a very detailed, comprehensive, and entertaining paper on Zebulon B. Vance. His presentation dealt with both the man, and his principles, and his relationship with the new Confederate government in Richmond. Zebulon Vance was first elected Governor of NC in 1862. He was re-elected in 1865. After his imprisonment after the Civil War, he was re-elected Governor for a 3rd time in 1877. In 1879 he was elected to the US Senate. NC is divided into 3 regions. The Western section is typified by the Blue Ridge Mountains. This area was good for logging and small farms. The center portion of the State is called the Piedmont Section. It basically is comprised of rolling hills. It is suitable for moderate size farms, however the clay base soil is not suitable for crops such as cotton. The Eastern portion of the State is referred to as "The Inter-coastal Plain". The land slopes to the ocean, and such crops as peanuts, and was more into subsistence farming. The coastal area was used for fishing, salvaging sunken ships, shipping, etc. The major city in this sector was Wilmington. The shoals went out from the coast for 20+ miles, and were essentially shallow. This is one of the factors that made Wilmington a great blockade runner city. It precluded the deep draft Federal blockading ships from getting too close to the coast. The population of NC was roughly 1 million in 1860, comprised primarily of small farms and farmers. 72% of the white population had no slaves. Blacks accounted for roughly 330,000 of the population. Most slaves were in the coastal areas, and the balance were freedmen. Wilmington was the largest urban population center, with 10,000 people, whereas the State Capital – Raleigh – had 5,000 residents. The rest of the population lived in very small communities. There were only 300 plantations that comprised 1000 acres or more of land. 71% of the farms were 100 acres, or less. In 1860, illiteracy for whites dropped to 23%. The largest industry in NC was turpentine distilling. This industry comprised 2/3 of the total US turpentine distilling industry. NC also excelled in distilling a corn based concoction... North Carolina also had 39 cotton mills, and 9 woolen mills in operation. This was very important to the new Confederacy. Most "yeoman" farmers in NC were into subsistence farming, and fiercely independent. They would be termed the "middle class" now. This differed from the deep South, where people were either very well off, or very poor. Zebulon Baird Vance was born in Buncombe County, NC in 1830. He came from the above "middle class" background. They lived just North of Ashville, NC in the mountains. His family participated in the American Revolution. His Uncle was a Congressman. He attended UNC at age 21, and after 1 year was allowed to practice law in Raleigh. In 1852 he moved to Ashville and opened a law practice. At age 24 he entered into politics as a Wig on a State Seat. In 1858 he won his Congressional Seat. He was reelected in 1860. He was the one of the youngest members of the US Congress. In 1861 he resigned when he learned that NC was going to succeed from the Union, when Lincoln required each State to contribute 75,000 troops to "subdue the rebellious faction". NC withdrew on May 20th, 1861, the same date that marked the 86th anniversary of the Colonial Succession from England. Vance was already in Raleigh in command of a unit of NC troops. His unit was considered one of the most effective of all Confederate troop units. He was in the field 13 months. In 1862 he ran as "The Soldiers Candidate", & easily won the Governor's seat. Vance's 1st hand exposure to actual battle gave him a good perspective on the needs of the soldiers in the field. He was a Confederate, a Southerner, but 1st & foremost he was a North Carolinian. He insisted upon the rule of law even during the Civil War. He just did not want Richmond telling him "what to do", or "what not to do", as far as North Carolina was concerned. He disagreed with conscription. NC led the Confederacy in # of volunteers, and also led the Confederacy in desertions. These independent NC farmers did as the pleased. Vance regularly offered amnesty to these deserters, who would then return to their units. Vance also fought for exemptions for the civilian NC govt. administrators. He also fought Confederacy confiscation of private property, such as food, livestock, etc. The "Suspension of The Rite of Habious Corpus". He felt that people should not be imprisoned indefinitely with trial date on the horizon. Vance felt that the NC Supreme Court outranked the Confederate Government, as the Confederacy had no Supreme Court, which could over-rule the NC Supreme Court. Vance always considered "popular opinion" on any of his decrees. Vance's rulings could be viewed as "obstructionist" to Confederate Govt. needs, or they could be viewed as "protectionist" to his NC constituents he felt his primary responsibility to. However, Vance felt very strongly that the Southerners and the Confederacy should be independent of the Union. To assist the North Carolinians, he independently took action to create a 'State Assistance Blockade Running operation' to acquire goods from Europe. Vance had the State purchase NC cotton sitting on the docks to be taken to England for sale. He then contracted with British ships to run the blockade & take the cotton to Europe for sale from Wilmington, NC. Under this arrangement, 1/2 of the profits went to the British trading company, 1/3rd belonged to The State of NC. The remainder of the profits belonged to the Confederate Government. This NC profit money was then used to buy uniforms, medical equip., blankets, guns, etc. for NC State troops. Private blockade runners normally hauled in "luxury" items. Then Vance had the Confederate government issue Cotton Bonds to be sold in Europe as payment for some of the monies owed to NC by the Confederate government. These bonds were sold in Europe, and then the State of NC bought a fast blockade runner that was named after "Vance", but then became known as "Advance". The goods purchased for NC troops were to be first used by the NC troops, and the surplus would be available for other Confederate troops. This caused major problems with Richmond. Richmond then ordered that 1/3rd of all cargo space on Private blockade runners now was Confederate Govt. property. This created major legal issues, as the private blockade

runners generally had a contract for 75% of the cargo space. The private blockade runners also had 100% of the loss if their ship was captured, or sunk. Hence the private ships kind of did what they wanted, plus enforcement was very difficult. This issue finally came to a head when a Confederate agent in Bermuda halted a ship from sailing until this issue could be resolved. Confederate Secretary of The Navy Seddon finally released the ship, as the Confederacy receiving *something*, was better than receiving *nothing*. NC state officials then bought additional blockade runners, plus some privateer ships to operate out of Wilmington, the last open port of the Confederacy. The privateers then took good coal reserved for the blockade runners. When the Advance used some of the inferior coal, it resulted in the capture of the pride of blockade fleet of ships. These type of issues continued to plague the Confederacy, and the member states. Unfortunately, they could not be resolved during the Civil War, and were irrelevant after. Roger then concluded his presentation by listing the major battles that occurred in the State of North Carolina, concluding with the surrender of Joe Johnston's last Confederate operating army of any significance, at Bennett Place, just West of Durham, NC.

Vance was arrested after the war, and spent time in Old Capital Prison in Washington City. At the end of 1865 he was paroled and went back to Charlotte to practice law. He supplemented his income with speaking engagements. In 1870 Vance was elected to a US Senate Seat, but being on parole, he could not be seated. In 1876 he won his 3rd Governors Seat. Shortly thereafter, the last of the Federal occupation troops left the State of NC. His 3rd term as Governor was shortened as he was again elected to go to the US Senate, and this time he was seated. He held that seat until he died from a stroke on April 19, 1894 at age 64. He was married twice. His 1st wife had 4 sons. In 1878 he married a lady from Kentucky. Roger's final analysis was that "Zeb Vance was both a product of, and good for the State of North Carolina". "He also served the Confederacy better than he was ever given credit for".

PRESERVATION REPORT BY LEN OVERCASH, SR.

The Civil War Trust Meets its \$75,000 Fundraising Target for 5 Acres at Power's Hill

In October of 2010 the CWT announced a new campaign to save five important acres at Power's Hill on the Gettysburg Battlefield. From this location Union artillery batteries were able to pour a devastating fire into Confederate forces attacking Spangler's Spring and Lower Culp's Hill on July 3, 1863. The fire was so intense that one Confederate called it "Artillery Hell." The great news I would like to share with you is that we have now reached our fundraising goal for this tract. We've "taken that hill!" We've saved another five acres of this majestic battlefield. As always we could not have reached this goal without your donations and support. Right from the get-go you stepped forward with your hard earned dollars so that we could put this exposed land into the saved column. And for that I am eternally grateful.

Even better news is that this important section of Power's Hill will now be a place where you and future generations will be able to walk the very ground that played such a significant role in the Battle of Gettysburg.

The Civil War Preservation Trust has shortened its name to "The Civil War Trust," and after more than two decades – updated its organizational logo.

For the first time in many years, we have the chance to save over 500 acres of absolutely crucial hallowed ground at two enormously important Georgia battlefields...**with a nearly \$67-to-\$1 match of your donation dollar** to save almost 538 acres in Georgia.

(Orange, Va.) – In an unexpected development, Walmart announced that it has abandoned plans to pursue a special use permit previously awarded to the retail giant for construction of a supercenter on the Wilderness Battlefield. The decision came as the trial in a legal challenge seeking to overturn the special use permit was scheduled to begin in Orange County circuit court.

The Civil War Trust is part of the Wilderness Battlefield Coalition, an alliance of local residents and national groups seeking to protect the Wilderness battlefield. Lighthizer noted that the Wilderness Mississippi Sens. Thad Cochran and Roger Wicker have again proposed expanding the Vicksburg National Military Park to add the battlefields of Champion Hill, Port Gibson and Raymond.

ALL FOR THE UNION

2011 membership renewals are due and will gladly be accepted at the meeting or by mail to Jean Cairns, Treasurer 1420 71st St., Downers Grove, IL 60516

Rob Girardi's new book "Gettysburg in Art & Artifacts" is finally here. Copies will be available at the next meeting.

Cindy Intravartolo is still working on the SCCWRT archives. She is missing a photo of Don Nixon, who was president in 1969-70. She is also missing newsletters for Nov. '64, Oct. '75, and Dec. '75.

Len Overcash Sr. will be speaking on "Fort Fisher" at the Kankakee CWRT on March 4, 2011.

UPCOMING CIVIL WAR EVENTS

FEBRUARY 24, 2011
SOUTH SUBURBAN CWRT
Speaker Gordon Ramsey
Topic: "Civil War Balloons"
National City Bank of Frankfort
LaGrange Rd (Rt. 45) & Lincoln Hwy (Rt. 30)
pw279@sbcglobal.net
reservations

MARCH 4, 2011
NORTHERN ILLINOIS CWRT
Speaker: Rick Andresen
Topic: "Reconstruction"
Arlington Heights Memorial Library
500 N. Dunton Ave.
Arlington Heights, IL 60004
www.nicwrt.freehostia.com

MARCH 11, 2011
MCHENRY COUNTY CWRT
Speaker: Jeff Reczkowicz and Jeff Rees
Topic: "General Benjamin Butler"
Woodstock Library
440 West Judd Street
Woodstock, IL 60098

MARCH 11, 2011
CHICAGO CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE
Speaker: Susan Boarman
Topic: "Gettysburg Cyclorama"
Holiday Inn Mart Plaza Chicago
350 North Orleans Street
Dinner 6:30 p.m.
(630) 460-1865 to make reservations
chicagocwrttdinner@earthlink.net

MARCH 19, 2011
KANKAKEE CIVIL WAR SYMPOSIUM
The program includes: Eric A. Jacobson: "Battle of Franklin"; Terry Winshel: "Crucial to the Outcome-Vicksburg"; Dale Phillips: "Three Days That Changed History"; George Buss as "Abraham Lincoln"; Tim Connors as "Stephen A. Douglas" (815) 939-1041

FUTURE MEETINGS 2011 (3RD FRIDAY OF THE MONTH)

March 18, 2011
Civil War Horses & Mules (Part 2)
Ray Glick

April 15, 2011
"The Draft and the Civil War"
Bruce Allardice

May 20, 2011
"Fur God og Vort Land"
Jerry Allen

THE SALT CREEK CWRT
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