



General Orders

Rains' Regiment

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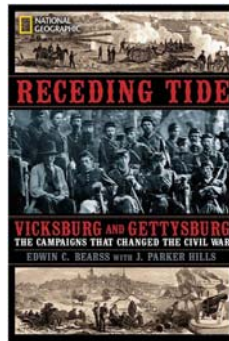


JANUARY 2011 MEETING
Thursday, January 20, 2011

The Briar Club
2603 Timmons Lane @ Westheimer
6:00 Cash Bar
7:00 Dinner & Meeting

E-Mail Reservation is Preferred;
at drzuckero@sbcglobal.net
or call Don Zuckero at (281) 479-1232
by 6 PM on Monday Jan. 17, 2011
Dinner \$33; Lecture Only \$5

Note: Reservations are required for Lecture Only!



In *Receding Tide*, Edwin Cole Bearss draws from his popular Civil War battlefield tours to chronicle these two widely separated but simultaneous clashes and their dramatic conclusion. As the recognized expert on both Vicksburg and Gettysburg, Bearss tells the fascinating story of this single momentous day in our country's history, offering his readers narratives, maps, illustrations, characteristic wit, dramatic new insights and unerringly intimate knowledge of terrain, tactics, and the colorful personalities of America's citizen soldiers, Northern and Southern alike.

The HCWRT PRESENTS

Edwin (Ed) C. Bearss "Receding Tide"

This month we are again pleased to host Ed Bearss who co-authored with J. Parker Hills the recently released book *Receding Tide - Vicksburg and Gettysburg: The Campaigns That Changed the Civil War*. His presentation will focus on this recent publication. As explained on the *Random House website*; It's a poignant irony in American history that on Independence Day, 1863, not one but two pivotal Civil War battles ended in Union victory, marked the high tide of Confederate military fortune, and ultimately doomed the South's effort at secession. But on July 4, 1863, after six months of siege, Ulysses Grant's Union army finally took Vicksburg and the Confederate west.

On the very same day, Robert E. Lee was in Pennsylvania, parrying the threat to Vicksburg with a daring push north to Gettysburg. For two days the battle had raged; on the next, July 4, 1863, Pickett's Charge was thrown back, a magnificently brave but fruitless assault, and the fate of the Confederacy was sealed, though nearly two more years of bitter fighting remained until the war came to an end.

About Edwin C. Bearss



Mr. Bearss is a U. S. Marine veteran of WWII, a military historian and author especially respected for his work on the Civil War. A much sought after tour guide of historic battlefields, Ed served as Chief Historian of the National Park Service from 1981 to 1994 and provided commentary for *The Civil War*, PBS Series by Ken Burns and also for *Civil War Journal* on The History Channel.

Ed is a native of Billings, Montana and grew up on a ranch several miles away from the nearest neighbor. His father introduced him to a John Thomason book on Confederate cavalryman Jeb Stuart when he was a young teenager, and from then on Ed was captivated by the study of the Civil War.

After leaving the Marine Corps, Ed completed his undergraduate education at Georgetown and his graduate work at the University of Indiana. While with the NPS, Ed performed important work in Vicksburg

when he and several colleagues pinpointed the location of the long lost Union gunboat USS Cairo and also for identifying two forgotten forts at Grand Gulf, Mississippi. A forty-one year veteran of the NPS, Ed, serving with distinction as Chief Historian, developed an impressive assortment of new parks, among them Pea Ridge and Wilson's Creek. In addition, he made important contributions to the development of sites at Bighorn Canyon, Fort Moultrie, the Eisenhower Farm at Gettysburg, Fort Donelson, the Lyndon B. Johnson Ranch, and the gold miners' route over Chilkoot Pass, among others.

It is as a personal interpreter and contemporary tour guide that Ed to most Americans is best known today. His booming voice, colorful dialogue, boundless energy and above all, unlimited enthusiasm for his subject never fail to captivate and inspire his listeners. Become one of his ever-expanding circle of admirers; join us on the evening of January 20th!



JANUARY BOOK RAFFLE

By Donnie Stowe

Here's to wishing to all a very Happy New Year and I hope everyone had a great Christmas as well. This month the HCWRT book raffle begins with ***An HONORABLE DEFEAT- The Last Days of the Confederate Government***, by William C. Davis and donated by Mrs. Eva Goulding; second in line is ***MRS. LINCOLN A life*** by Catherine Clinton and is donated by our member/Past president, Jim Godlove. We also have ***STONEWALL JACKSON – The Black Man's Friend***, Authored by Richard G. Williams Jr. – the donor is unknown. Finishing out this month is ***The American Heritage Picture History of THE CIVIL WAR*** with Narrative by Bruce Catton – donor again is Jim Godlove.

Our supply of quality books and other reading material is becoming increasingly limited. Members are encouraged to donate some of your well-read books or a small monetary donation for purchase of books to continue a valuable support to the HCWRT Raffle.

COMMANDER'S CORNER

By David Rains

I hope everyone is off to a good start in the New Year. Our January 20 meeting will indeed be special with the return of the famed Civil War Historian Ed Bearss after two years. Ed usually visits us each January and also hosts our fall trip though he missed the 2010 trip due to a conflict. I am sure everyone will look forward to seeing Ed again so please get your reservations made with Don Zuckero for either dinner or the lecture.

JANUARY QUIZ

By Jim Godlove



ON DECEMBER 12, 1862, A CONFEDERATE TORPEDO (WHICH NOW MAY BE TERMED A MINE) SANK A UNION IRONCLAD ON THE YAZOO RIVER JUST NORTH OF VICKSBURG.

NAME THAT VESSEL.

The Top 12 Civil War Books

Ever Written

By Glenn W. LaFantasie

If, like me, you received a necktie with reindeer on it from Santa instead of a good Civil War book under the Christmas tree, then you might try selecting one for yourself from my own list of the top 12 Civil War books, which I offer here in the spirit of the season and, even more appropriately, as the 150th anniversary of the war is about to begin. Perhaps your own observance of the sesquicentennial could include reading one of these books a month over the next year. If so, I can promise you'll be edified by every one of them, even if they do not end up on your own personal list of favorite Civil War books. And something more: there'll be no exam next December.

Putting together such a list is, of course, a nearly impossible task, given the stacks and stacks of excellent books on the Civil War that have been published since 1865. Historians like to say that

60,000 books give or take a few thousand, have been written about the war, but I'd wager that estimate is way too low. One needs only ponder the steady stream of books on nearly every aspect of the war that regularly roll off the presses to realize that Americans never seem to get enough of their favorite war.

Trying to name the top dozen Civil War books of all time is, admittedly, a brazen act on my part. Nevertheless, the books on this list are, indeed, my all-time favorites -- cherished works that have informed and inspired me, sometimes leaving me awestruck. In some cases, I've read these books more than once. Each time, I extract something new from them; never has my opinion of them lessened from reading them again. They are like old friends: They never wear you out and they don't ask much from you, other than that you think of them from time to time and recall what they mean to you.

All of these books occupy a special place in my own collection of Civil War works -- not only because I'm a Civil War historian, but also because these happen to be extraordinary books, every one of which has been written by exceptionally gifted authors. These are the sort of books you wish you hadn't read before, if only because you'd like to recapture the pure delight of reading them fresh for the first time. I hope you'll find my descriptions of them enticing enough to seek them out for yourself. No doubt you might disagree with my assessment of them. One of my wisest professors once said that books don't belong to their authors -- they belong to their readers. Every reader will have a different response to these books, but my hope is that you might enjoy them -- or any one of them -- as much as I do.

First, some arbitrary rules that have guided my selection of titles. I've only included books published after World War II, which means I'm leaving out a long shelf of good books issued before the second half of the 20th century, some of which still stand the test of time. Out of necessity, I've narrowly defined the universe from which I have picked my top dozen. For example, I've not included any biographies on this list -- an exclusion that some may find indefensible. No series or multivolume works are included here either, which means that Allan Nevins' majestic "The Ordeal of the Union" (eight volumes), Bruce Catton's "Centennial History of the Civil War" (three volumes), and Shelby Foote's very popular "The Civil War" (three volumes) are not to be found below, despite the fact that they all qualify as masterpieces. What's more, I've stuck to only nonfiction titles, so fans of Margaret Mitchell's "Gone With the Wind" or Michael Shaara's "The Killer

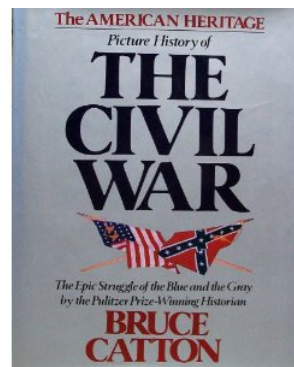
Angels" (both winners of the Pulitzer Prize) will be disappointed to see these novels missing from my list.

In any event, here are a dozen books that, for me, tell the story of the Civil War with literary elegance, intellectual gusto and enormous flair. Most of these books are in print (and in paper editions) and may be purchased at your local bookstore, from out-of-print book dealers, or from any of numerous book retailers on the Internet (links provided in the list below are to BarnesandNoble.com).

The preceding article in its' entirety can be found at the following web address:

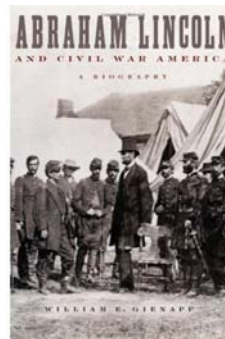
<http://www.salon.com/books/history/index.html>

We will be sharing the list of these 12 books over the next several months here in General Orders.



12. "The American Heritage Picture History of the Civil War": This coffee-table book, first published by the old American Heritage magazine company in 1960, offers lavish illustrations, including scores of photographs by Mathew Brady and other masterful war photographers, and a

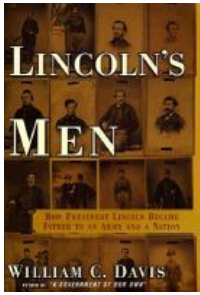
lively narrative by Bruce Catton, who was widely considered at the time to be the dean of Civil War historians. Although American Heritage tried to update the book for a new generation of readers by publishing a more dazzling edition in 2001 (mostly by adding illustrations, captions and sidebars while retaining Catton's basic text), the original edition remains a classic; in many respects, the old outshines the new, which lacks editorial cohesion and seems almost slapdash in its presentation. If you are a Civil War enthusiast and you don't own the 1960 edition, your library is woefully incomplete. If you are only casually interested in the Civil War, this is the one book you should read and own.



11. "Abraham Lincoln and Civil War America": This slim book packs a powerful punch. As the title says, this is as much a book about America during the Civil War era as it is about Lincoln, who led the Northern states to victory. The late William E. Gienapp, who taught at Harvard, skillfully weaves Lincoln's life and the great events of his lifetime into a single, riveting narrative. What's remarkable about this book is how

much ground it covers, including perspicacious tidbits about Lincoln, in just over 200 pages. Feliculously written,

this book is captivating and informative. By no means is this simply a rehash -- old wine in a new bottle. Gienapp offers a fresh perspective on the Civil War and the 16th president who became one of its most tragic victims.



10. "*Lincoln's Men: How President Lincoln Became Father to an Army and a Nation*": As the Civil War erupted, Abraham Lincoln called on the states to supply men and arms for an army. In doing so, he defined the modern role of the president as commander in chief. In this robustly written book, William C. Davis, a prolific and remarkably talented author, explains how Lincoln not only

organized the government to fight the Civil War, but how he successfully won the affection of the thousands of Northern soldiers who filled the ranks, marched down dusty roads, and, in so many cases, gave their lives for the Union cause. For these soldiers, the president became "Father Abraham," and their devotion to him and to their country manifested itself in their faith that his leadership would eventually pilot them down the road to victory. Relying on unpublished soldier letters and diaries to great effect, Davis reveals in stunning detail what was in the hearts and minds of Northern soldiers who adored their president and who made the crucial difference in electing him to a second term in 1864.

HCWRT 2010-2011 SPEAKERS CAMPAIGN

Feb 17, 2011	Ed Bonekemper - <i>Six Turning Points of War</i>
Mar 17, 2011	James Bevill - <i>Confederate Money</i>
Apr 21, 2011	Don Frazier - <i>To Be Announced</i>
May 19, 2011	Jack Waugh - <i>To Be Announced</i>

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Website Updates
By Philip Brown



The Round Table's website is undergoing some updates at this time. The changes should be completed by the date of our January meeting. Please take time to visit the website and give us some feedback.

We would particularly like to post some pictures from past fieldtrips along with the agenda and some anecdotal summaries or reviews. Please, email your contributions to:

Webmaster@HoustonCivilWar.com.



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