



General Orders

Lewis's Texas Brigade

Vol. 21,
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Jan,
2010

www.houstoncivilwar.com

MEETING – THURS, Jan 21, 2010

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

E-Mail drzuckero@sbcglobal.net
OR call him at (281) 479-1232 to Reserve
by Monday 6 PM Prior to Jan 21
Dinner \$30; Lecture Only \$5
E-Mail Reservation is Preferred;
You Do Need to Reserve for Lecture Only!

ED COTHAM PRESENTS: *NOTHING BUT DISASTER: THE FAILURE OF UNION PLANS TO CAPTURE TEXAS*



Edward T. Cotham, Jr.

In the fall of 1862, a Union conquest of Texas seemed inevitable. By the end of 1863, however, just a year later, the situation had been completely reversed and Confederate forces

were firmly in control of the major Texas ports. Admiral David Glasgow Farragut complained that he had “nothing but disaster” to report about the Union’s Texas campaign. The dramatic story of how the Texas coast came back into Confederate hands is the focus of Ed Cotham’s multi-media presentation to the HCWRT.

The University of North Texas Press has recently released a book entitled *The Seventh Star of the Confederacy: Texas During the Civil War*. Edited by Kenneth W. Howell, this new study includes contributions by 17 of the finest scholars in the field of Texas and Civil War History. Among the chapters in this work is Ed Cotham’s *Nothing but Disaster: The Failure of Union Plans to Capture Texas*.

Ed’s chapter covers the crucial period from the recapture of Galveston at the beginning of 1863 through the remarkable Confederate victory at Sabine Pass in September, 1863. The book will be available for purchase at the January meeting, and this will be Ed’s first formal book signing event for the new work.



A FEW WORDS ABOUT OUR SPEAKER

Edward T. Cotham, Jr. is President of the Terry Foundation in Houston, Texas. He holds an undergraduate degree in Economics from the University of Houston and a Masters Degree in Economics from the University of Chicago. A native Texan, Ed returned to Texas to obtain a Law Degree from the University of Texas in 1979.

Our speaker is a former President of the Houston Civil War Round Table and is active in the Civil War Preservation movement. He is a founder and director of the Friends of Sabine Pass Battleground, a non-profit group dedicated to supporting preservation and interpretation of that important battlefield.

He is also a life member of the Civil War Preservation Trust, as well as a member of the Company of Military Historians and the Authors' Guild. In September, 2005, he was awarded the Jefferson Davis Historical Gold Medal by the United Daughters of the Confederacy. In May, 2006, he was further awarded the Frank C. Vandiver Award of Merit by the Houston Civil War Round Table.

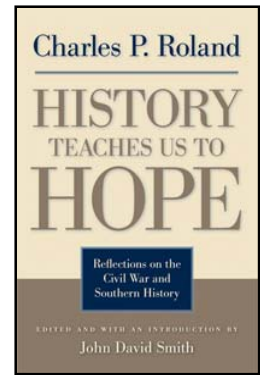
Ed's published works include *Battle on the Bay: The Civil War Struggle for Galveston* (1998, University of Texas Press) and *Sabine Pass: the Confederacy's Thermopylae* (2004). His *Sabine Pass* work was the winner of the Dan and Marilyn Laney Prize for Civil War Battlefield Preservation. That award is given annually by the Austin Civil War Round Table to the author of the book that best promotes the heritage and preservation of endangered battlefields of the Civil War. *The Southern Journey of a Civil War Marine: The Illustrated Notebook of Henry O. Susley* was published by the University Press in January, 2006. The unique nature of this book made it a best-seller and led to an interview on National Public Radio that brought Ed and his book to the attention of Civil War enthusiasts across the country.

So make your reservations to listen, learn, and be entertained by Ed on the evening of January 21 at the Briar Club. It should be a great evening and well worth the time invested for everyone setting aside this evening for the HCWRT!

JANUARY BOOK RAFFLE by DONNIE STOWE

This month the HCWRT book raffle begins with *History Teaches Us to Hope – Reflections on the Civil War and Southern History*. The book is authored by Charles P. Roland and was contributed to our Round Table by Norm Lewis.

Second in line is *Lee's Colonels – A Biographical Register of the Field Officers of the Army of Northern Virginia* by Robert K. Krick and is donated by our member and Past President, Jim Godlove. Also donated by Jim is *The Autobiography of Wilburn Hill King*, edited by L. David Norris; and to complete this month's raffle, we will offer *Leslie's Illustrated Civil War*, donor unknown.



Our supply of quality books and other reading and visual materials is becoming somewhat **limited**. We want to encourage members to donate some of your well-read Civil War materials to our raffle collection or, in lieu of this, to make a small monetary donation for the purchase of suitable books, periodicals, maps, etc. for future Round Table raffles.



AUSTIN GROUP FINDS SUNKEN UNION GUNBOAT IN GALVESTON BAY

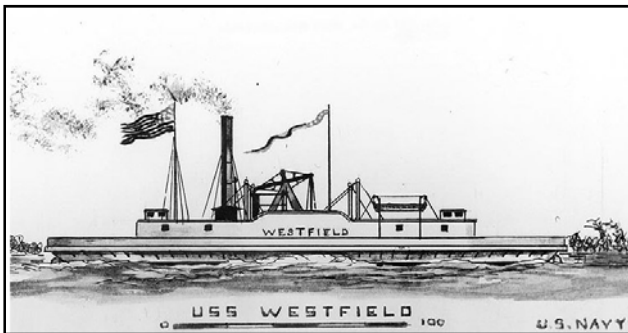
On New Year's Day, 1863, Union soldiers occupied Galveston. As Confederate steamers launched an attack to regain the island, the *USS Westfield*, a Union gunship, ran aground on a sandbar north of Pelican Island.

As the ship's commander, William B. Renshaw, set about preparing to destroy the *Westfield* rather than allow her to be captured, the vessel exploded, killing Renshaw and a boat crew assisting him. Contents of the boat that had not previously been removed by the crew

before the explosion lay buried deep in the Texas City Channel for almost 150 years.

Fast-forward to 2004, when the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers announced a \$71 million partnership with the oil and refinery businesses focused upon a navigable Texas City Channel waterway. To safeguard the archaeological preservation of the area, the Corps hired an Austin nautical archaeology group headed by Bob Gearhart in association with PBS&J, a national engineering, environmental, and construction planning company.

In November of 2009, divers and salvage crews relatively certain of the archaeological importance of the area bumped into an 11-foot-long piece of metal with an opening at one end. The site was that of the *USS Westfield's* 10,000 pound Dahlgren cannon, one of some 1,200 made during the Civil War and one of only 50 recovered. Artifact retrieval operations commenced soon after the find in preparation for for a planned 5-foot deepening of the Texas City Channel in that area. The Corps and Galveston District and Navy salvage experts were engaged in artifact recovery efforts at the site. The cannon was raised on November 22, 2009 and is currently undergoing restoration processes at Texas A&M in College Station. The electrolysis immersion is anticipated to require up to two years for salt removal and metal preservation.



The *USS Westfield* had been built in 1861 as a Staten Island Ferry and was purchased by the Navy from Cornelius Vanderbilt later that same year and converted into a gunboat. Before serving in Texas, the ship was engaged in supporting operations under Commander David Dixon Porter in preparation for Farragut's run between two forts guarding the entrance waters

into the port of New Orleans. She later repositioned herself in the Gulf of Mexico and assumed blockading duties off the Texas Coast.

As of 2007, no other ship in the United States Navy has been commissioned *USS Westfield*.

CIVIL WAR PHOTOS OF THE MONTH by *Karen Stone*

January's recipient of the recognition for this photography falls to Ron Featherston for his two Shiloh autumn photos of the Tennessee monument and Bloody Pond. I chose the first of Ron's photos because of the clear detail of the imagery in contrast with the fog-laden background of trees and cannonry. I chose the second for much the same reason. The reflected images in the water setting are both poignant and tranquil.

Thank you, Ron!



Tennessee Monument, Shiloh



Bloody Pond, Shiloh

**HCWRT SPEAKERS
2009 – 2010 CAMPAIGN**

Jan 21	Ed Cotham
Feb 18	Dick Sommers
Mar 18	Patrick Falci
Apr 15	Tony Banzhaf
May 20	TBA

**FOCUS: TWO FAMOUS
RICHMOND CEMETERIES:
HOLLYWOOD AND SHOCKOE
HILL**

These two very historic cemeteries in Richmond have endured the cruel effects of time and nature over the past 162 and 187 years, respectively. Both on the National Register of Historic Places, they are the burial grounds for some of Virginia's most prominent people: U.S. presidents, Supreme Court justices, governors, and mayors.

Now the cemeteries are benefiting from two volunteer organizations—*Friends of Hollywood Cemetery* and *Friends of Shockoe Hill Cemetery*, both recently formed to bring new focus to the needs and historic importance of each site to modern-day Americans.



Hollywood Cemetery, Richmond, VA

The most important section in the Hollywood burial grounds is *Presidents' Circle*, where James Monroe and John Tyler are buried. Other notables elsewhere in the cemetery include Confederate President Jefferson Davis, six Virginia governors, 22 Confederate generals, two Supreme Court justices, Confederate soldiers, business leaders and literary figures.

It has been determined that a full restoration of the site and its monuments could cost as much as \$7 million. Income from about 200 burials a year produces only about half of the cemetery's \$1 million to \$1.5 million operating budget, with only about \$75,000 allocated to restoration and preservation.



Hollywood Pyramid

In an effort to raise needed funds, *Friends* Board members set a first phase goal of \$1.5 to \$2 million. That amount would repair *Presidents' Circle* and surrounding areas.

Shockoe Hill Cemetery, where Chief Justice John Marshall is buried, opened in 1822 on 12.7 acres in North Richmond. Having fallen into disrepair over the years, the *cemetery* has been reorganized by the *Friends* to staff groups of volunteers to take on duties such as providing upkeep for gravesites, raking leaves, etc. The cemetery is filled with history and the remains of thousands of people, from the prominent to the poor. Many Civil War soldiers are buried there as well.

The goal of the *Friends of Shockoe* is to provide a place for genealogical groups, historical groups, and families that want to re-connect with their heritage, visit their ancestors or re-claim family burial sites.



Shockoe Hill Cemetery, Richmond, VA

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

The Houston Civil War Round Table is dedicated to the study of the civilian, military, and cultural aspects of United States history during the period of 1861 – 1865 and to the preservation of historical sites and artifacts.

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Mail To: **Houston Civil War Round Table**
P. O. Box 4215
Houston, TX 77210-4215

NEW MEMBER

\$40 – Individual joining in Apr – Dec
\$20 – Individual Joining in Jan – Mar
\$45 – Family joining in Apr – Dec
\$22 – Family joining in Jan – Mar
\$15 – Student or Out-of-State

RENEWAL

\$40 – Individual
\$45 – Family
\$15 – Student or Out-of-State

RESEARCH ON *HUNLEY* CONSERVATION YIELDS NEW DISCOVERIES



Immersed Hunley Submarine in Refrigerated Storage Tank upon Recovery

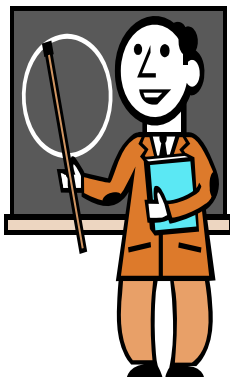
It's common knowledge that when iron and salt water begin to merge, with iron swapping its ions with chloride ions in the seawater, the relationship remains stable, and the iron stays well preserved. However, when the iron is exposed to the air, the process of oxidation presents an entirely different result. Marine conservators have always wrestled with how to preserve iron once it is removed from the sea. They boiled artifacts, heated them, and painted over them, but none of those techniques have achieved the desired results.

For the *Hunley*, conservators decided the safest course was to soak the raised sub in a caustic bath and zap it with electricity for a number of years to remove the chlorides. By chance, however, the *Hunley* conservators discovered a new option in the fall of 2001.

The process under consideration by conservators is “**subcritical**” water. If this process were to work on the *Hunley*, it was thought, conservators might be able to preserve artifacts in a matter of weeks or months instead of years. So during the past several years, these men have been testing subcritical water's effects on thumb-sized iron artifacts, and so far this technique has worked.

Although the technique was used successfully on tiny artifacts, it is not likely to be used on the *Hunley*, deemed too important a find for that kind of experimentation, or on larger artifacts at present such as cannonry. However, research

JANUARY QUIZ QUESTION by *Jim Godlove*



The commander of the USS Harriet Lane during the Battle of Galveston had a grandson who won the Medal of Honor for his defense of Corregidor during World War II.

Name the two men.

into the effects of subcritical water on iron artifacts has led to other recent discoveries.

So, just what is “subcritical” water? Well, in the Clemson Conservation Center at the Warren Lasch lab in North Charleston is a waist-high metal cylinder. It is called a “sub-critical reactor,” and the contraption is a sophisticated cousin of the pressure cooker and has nothing to do with radioactivity. It simply creates pressures 50 times higher than what might be found in the open air, and this intense pressure causes materials to react differently. The boiling point for water, for example, shoots from 212 degrees Fahrenheit to 392 degrees. Just below this higher boiling point, the water becomes “subcritical” and behaves like methanol and other solvents.

Michael Drews, director of the Clemson Conservation Center at the Lasch lab, and other researchers have been investigating whether subcritical water can preserve iron artifacts. The process used on several of the Hunley’s smaller rivet artifacts has successfully preserved these pieces 10 times faster than other processes.

Research into the effects of subcritical water on iron artifacts also has led to other discoveries. Researchers learned, for example, that the process has an etching effect on metal that can be seen only with powerful electron microscopes.

Partly because of this metals research, the International Conference on Historic Metal Conservation will meet in Charleston in October. Approximately 300 Conservators, museum officials, and scientists from 50 countries are

Hunley senior conservator Paul Mardikian with Dr. Ian Donald McLeod from the Western Australian Maritime Museum, working on the Hunley.



expected to travel to Charleston to attend the conference.

Houston Civil War Round Table
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