



General Orders

Franty's Brigade

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MARCH, 2017 MEETING
Thursday, March 16, 2017

The HESS Club
5430 Westheimer Rd @ Westheimer Way
6:00 Cash Bar
6:45 Dinner & Meeting
7:30 Program Begins

E-mail Reservation is Preferred;
E-mail Don Zuckero at drzuckero@sbcglobal.net,
or call (281) 479-1232 by 6 pm Monday, March 13,
2017

Dinner \$30; Lecture Only \$10

***** Reservations are Required *****
FOR BOTH DINNER and LECTURE ONLY

The HCWRT Presents
Brian Steel Wills
Speaking on:

***“George Thomas At Nashville: The
‘Sledge’ Hammers Hood”***

In the aftermath of the fighting in Georgia in late 1863, Virginia-born Union General George Henry Thomas had won an enduring name at Chickamauga, becoming the central element in a major push against Atlanta in 1864. The fall of that city in September opened the way for William T. Sherman to consider his next options. The aggressive Sherman decided on a march toward Savannah and the sea, while tasking his subordinate Thomas with challenging any effort by John Bell Hood's Confederate Army of Tennessee to move back into its namesake state and approach the doorsteps of the capital or bypass it into Kentucky.

General Thomas' final great wartime accomplishment came at Nashville in late 1864. Despite testiness in the War Department, remarkably uncooperative wintry weather, and almost being relieved of his command when Ulysses Grant determined he had been too slow to act, Thomas staged a powerful two-day assault on December 15-16 that staggered Hood's depleted forces. The victory would reaffirm Thomas' role as one of the Union's premier generals.



Brian Steel Wills

Nevertheless, tension had marked the relationship between Thomas and Grant at Nashville. The question appeared to be less one of loyalty, enthusiasm, or personal antagonism on the part of the popular general than of his inability to mesh well with the style of his superior in waging war. Grant's earlier experiences with his subordinate at Chattanooga and Sherman's continual chiding of Thomas and the Army of the Cumberland during the Atlanta Campaign further established

the prism through which those generals viewed the comrade that both professed to admire and respect.

About Brian Steel Wills

Brian Steel Wills is the Director of the Center for the Study of the Civil War Era and Professor of History at Kennesaw State University in Kennesaw, Ga. He has been a speaker at HCWRT multiple times, and led our tour of the Atlanta Campaign in 2015.

In addition to leading tours, offering lectures, and conducting programs, Dr. Wills is the author of numerous works relating to the American Civil War. His most recent publications are *The River was Dyed with Blood: Nathan Bedford Forrest and Fort Pillow* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2014), *Confederate General William Dorsey Pender: The Hope of Glory* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2013), and ***George Henry Thomas: As True as Steel*** (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2012), which was the recipient of the 2013 Richard Barksdale Harwell Award for the best book on a Civil War topic for the year 2012 presented by the Civil War Round Table of Atlanta.

His biography of Confederate General Nathan Bedford Forrest, *A Battle From the Start: The Life of Nathan Bedford Forrest* is currently in reprint as *The Confederacy's Greatest Cavalryman: Nathan Bedford Forrest* (University Press of Kansas). This work was chosen as both a History Book Club selection and a Book of the Month Club selection.

In 2000, Dr. Wills received the Outstanding Faculty Award from the Commonwealth of Virginia, one of eleven recipients from all faculty members at public and private institutions across the state. A graduate of the University of Richmond (Va.), and the University of Georgia, he spends time on his farm in Virginia when not teaching and working in Kennesaw.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

By Emily Ryan

If you have changed your e-mail address or telephone numbers, please be sure to forward

these changes to Scott Wilkey of our Membership Committee. Scott's e-mail address is Membership@HoustonCivilWar.com. We want to keep our records up to date and do not want you to miss any notifications. Thanks!



COMMANDER'S CORNER

By Marsha Franty

Spring in South Texas! Though winter was unusually kind to us this year, it's always energizing to feel that warm spring air, to find bluebonnets popping up everywhere, and to celebrate our Texas heritage and history.

A short drive in a southerly direction will take you to Galveston where you will want to visit the Bryan Museum (www.thebryanmuseum.org). You may recall that Mr. Bryan visited with us last year to tell us about the fruition of his passion for searching out and collecting Texana. His superb, varied collection contains many Civil War-era items, as well as other interesting displays. It is housed in the historic Galveston Orphans Home on 21st Street. In addition to the permanent exhibits, there are focus exhibits, lectures, and other special events.

A short drive in a northerly direction will take you to Washington-on-the-Brazos. Although the focus here is on an age which preceded the Civil War, any history buff would enjoy this State Historic Site, the Star of the Republic Museum, and Independence Hall (www.texas.gov/state-parks.washington-on-the-brazos).

If you are not in the mood to leave our fair city, the Houston Museum of Natural Science is currently presenting an exhibit called "Mapping Texas: From Frontier to the Lone Star State." As of the writing of this newsletter, two special lectures related to this exhibit are already scheduled, one on the evening of Thursday, 30 March, and the other on the evening of

Tuesday, 6 June. Admission is free to Museum members and more information can be found on the Museum website: www.hmns.org.

If you desire to venture further afield, you might consider two other opportunities. On Saturday, 22 April, the 2nd Annual Sultana Heritage Festival in Marion, Arkansas will commemorate “America’s largest maritime disaster.” For additional information, visit their website at www.sultanaheritagefestival.com.

During the dates of 5 - 7 May, the Cape Fear Civil War Symposium will be held at Oak Island, North Carolina. The theme is “War on the Carolina Coast” and speakers will include Dr. Steven Wise, who was one of our guides in the Charleston area just a few years ago. If you would like additional information, send an e-mail to nsloan@fortcaswell.com.

Please join us on Thursday the 16th for an engaging evening with our friend Brian Steel Wills!



Brian Steel Wills at Kennesaw Mountain, 2015 Field Trip

HOOD’S TEXAS BRIGADE ASSOCIATION TOUR

As we mentioned in last month’s newsletter, the Hood’s Texas Brigade Association is conducting a battlefield tour June 6 – 9, 2017. It is entitled “Gettysburg of the West: Texans and the Battle of Franklin.” The tour leaders and speakers have been firmed up. They include Sam Hood, principal organizer; Eric Jacobson, CEO, Battle of Franklin Trust; Thomas Y.

Cartwright, leading authority on the Battle of Franklin, and Robert Hicks, author of *The Widow of the South*.

For additional information, contact Martha Hartzog at (512) 431-2682 or via e-mail at m.hartzog@mail.utexas.edu.

MARCH BOOK RAFFLE *By Donnie Stowe*

For our March, 2017 meeting, the HCWRT book raffle begins with one of my favorites, **NATHAN BEDFORD FORREST – FIRST WITH THE MOST** by Robert Selph Henry. Next up is **GENERAL ULYSSES S. GRANT – The Soldier and the Man** by Edward G. Longacre. In this biography, Longacre examines Grant’s early life, military career and some of his personal misfortunes. Our third selection is **THE CIVIL WAR YEARS** by Robert E. Denney. This volume is a day-by-day chronicle of the Civil War. Our fourth selection is **A CIVIL WAR TREASURY OF TALES, LEGENDS AND FOLKLORE** edited by B.A. Botkin and is a donation out of Norm Lewis’s collection. And last but not least is **CIVIL WAR WIVES** by Carol Berkin. This book gives us the lives & times of Angelina Grimke Weld, Varina H. Davis and Julia Dent Grant.



Members are also encouraged to visit the table which contains some reasonably priced Civil War gems that the HCWRT is selling.

MARCH QUIZ *By Jim Godlove*

General George H. Thomas acquired two nicknames as a result of battles in the Civil War. One battle was fought in September, 1863 and the other in December, 1864.



What were these two nicknames?

THE HOUSTON CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE 2016 - 2017 SPEAKERS CAMPAIGN – THE HESS CLUB

Mar. 16, 2017 Brian Steel Wills: “*George Thomas at Nashville: The ‘Sledge’ Hammers Hood*”

Apr. 20, 2017 Elizabeth R. Varon: “*Legacies of Appomattox: Lee’s Surrender in History and Memory*”

May 18, 2017 John F. Schmutz: “*The Bloody Fifth*” (the *Fifth Texas Infantry*)

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Houston Civil War Round Table
c/o Barry G. Brueggeman
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