

The Charger



The Cleveland Civil War Roundtable

Jan. 2022

vol. #45 # 5

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President's Message

Fellow Roundtable Members:

I hope you enjoyed the presentation given by Eric Wittenburg at our December 8th meeting as much as I did. Eric's encyclopedic knowledge of the cavalry's role in the Gettysburg campaign was truly impressive. His conclusion, that there was "plenty of blame to go around" for the Confederate defeat, was ably supported by his arguments. Eric made the point that the discretionary orders Lee issued to Stuart prior to the campaign's start left Stuart with wide latitude in their execution. He also noted that Lee retained a significant cavalry force during the march into Pennsylvania, such that Stuart's absence should not have had the negative impact later figures, particularly Jubal Early, claimed. Eric did a super job, and we hope he will be able to return in the future to address the Roundtable on another suitable controversial topic.

Our January 12th meeting will feature four members taking part in the annual Dick Crews debate. The topic is: Apart from U.S. Grant and William T. Sherman, which Civil War general or flag officer subjected to discipline by superiors during the war, deserved it the least? The debaters and their subjects are:

Gene Claridge Maj. Gen. Gouverneur , K. Warren, USA

Jake Collens: Maj. Gen. Fitz John Porter, USA

John C. Fazio Maj. Gen., Joseph Hooker CSA

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President's Message cont.

Mel Maurer, Gen. Joseph E. Johnston, CSA

The debate will be moderated by our very own Judge William Vodrey. The winner, meaning the debater who presented the most compelling case for his subject, will be chosen by the members assembled. Fabulous prizes will then be awarded to the winner by Judge Vodrey.

If you haven't made your reservations, please do so without delay! I look forward to seeing you at our January 12th meeting.

Best, Mark Porter

The Last Battle of the Civil War

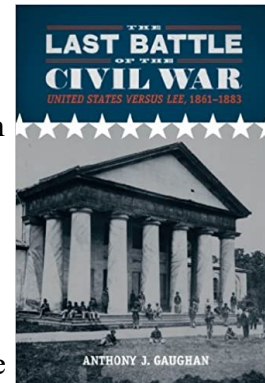
By Anthony J. Gaughan

A book purchased several years ago in Washington D.C. goes a long way in solving a mystery which has plagued me for sometime. It is titled "The Last Battle of the Civil War" by Anthony J. Gaughan, and it describes the legal battle between the heirs of Mary Custis Lee and the U.S. Government.

As we look across the Potomac River with our back to the Lincoln Memorial, we see the Memorial Bridge stretching over the river to the Arlington home of the Lees standing atop the bluff. Mr. Gaughan's book describes the suit pertaining to the seizure of the estate in 1861 which was filed by George Washington Custis Lee, Robert E. Lee's oldest son. The case went all the

way to the U.S. Supreme Court, and this book describes how seventeen years after the surrender at Appomattox, Lee's oldest son won a sweeping victory over The U.S. Government. The Supreme Court of the United States ruled five to four that the Lee family and not the U.S. government owned Arlington! The book tells the story of what became known as The Arlington Case and how the heirs of Robert E. Lee fought to regain title to the Arlington Estate.

Let's start at the beginning of the story. The 1,100 acre Arlington Estate was inherited by the father-in-law of Robert E. Lee (Robert E. Lee never owned Arlington), who was the grandson of Martha Custis. Washington himself had no children, and Martha's two children by a former marriage were also deceased. She did however have two grandchildren one of which was George Washington Parke Custis. Washington's nephew Augustus Washington inherited Mt. Vernon and his grandson was willed Arlington. Custis built the mansion we see today at the top of the bluff and wanted it to become a memorial to George Washington, and in it he placed many of Washington's possessions. Arlington itself was never a working estate people; visited the house to see Washington's possessions which Custis displayed; the springs at the foot of the hill were developed and became a favorite picnic spot and dance hall for the local folks. Much of the acreage was leased out to different individuals for various purposes. George Washington Parke Custis lived until 1857 and upon his passing his only child Mary Custis Lee inherited the property. She was not a farmer and her husband Robert E. Lee was away on assignment much of the time until 1861. In April 1861 it became evident that Arlington had to be secured by the U.S.



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Government to prevent any Confederate seizure of the property. Robert E. Lee went to Richmond, and Mary Custis Lee fled Arlington never to return. It was at this point that the dispute erupted. After the death of Mary Custis Lee her oldest son wanted to receive compensation for the seized estate. So in 1877 he brought suit to vindicate the family's claim to it. At no time did he wish to return to the home, but he did want compensation. Much of the case revolved around the seizure of the estate for nonpayment of real estate taxes. It seems that Mary Custis Lee did attempt to pay the taxes in 1861 but the tax commissioners in Arlington County Virginia refused to accept them demanding that she pay them in person which she of course could not do. According to Mr. Gaughan, "for more than twenty years Congress refused to pay compensation to Mary Lee, the legal owner of Arlington, or her son. In the government's view, the Fifth Amendment did not apply to the Arlington case because the War Department asserted title to the estate through a tax sale rather than through eminent domain." He also asserts that, "The case of United States v. Lee commonly known as the 'Arlington Case' reached the Supreme Court in the spring of 1882." The court's decision regarding Arlington's title came as no surprise. "Evidence demonstrated that a relation of the Lees attempted to pay Arlington's property tax but was turned away by the tax commissioners.

The book, while very well researched, is full of legal terms and is hard to follow if one is not familiar with legalese. It is nevertheless full of fascinating facts which reflect on the animosity which plagued the country after the Civil War. Not being a lawyer I had to read a chapter at least twice and put the book down for a week to understand what was actually occurring. All in all, Mr Gaughan does an excellent job of relating the history of this case. The book is well worth reading for the content alone, and I would highly recommend it to anyone interested in the lesser known facts of our history.

It is interesting to consider that when Mary Custis Lee fled Arlington she only took what she could carry. After the U.S. troops arrived they began to steal several pieces of furniture and several of Washington's possessions, Mary wrote a letter to General McDowell telling him not to let the soldiers take Washington's artifacts as they really belonged to the nation as a whole. Thankfully a detail was formed and the house was emptied of the Lee's and Washington's possessions and today we can see many of them at the Mt. Vernon Visitors Center and at the Smithsonian Institution Museum of American History.

Reviewed By Paul Seidel

Gaughan, Anthony J.

"The Last Battle of the Civil War, United States Versus Lee, 1861-1883" Louisiana State University Press, Baton Rouge, Copyright 2011

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To The Victor Goes the Spurs (and Sword)

©Brian D. Kowell

June 2, 2021

It was April 6, 1865 and the Confederacy was unraveling. Four days previous the Union Army had breached the Confederate siege lines around Petersburg, Virginia. President Jefferson Davis was in Danville on his way south, and General Robert E. Lee's starving Army of Northern Virginia was slogging west to the crossings of the Appomattox River seeking safety from the pursuing Federals.

A spring drizzle had dampened the countryside that day in April. Near Marshall's Crossroads, Virginia, Lieutenant Colonel Francis "Frank" Kinloch Huger's artillery battalion was less than half its strength. When the battalion was at Amelia Court House, the best horses and equipment were selected to remain with Lee's retreating army while the 16 remaining guns, were sent to Lynchburg. Brigadier General Edward Porter Alexander said of Huger that he "Never shirked a care or danger or grumbled over hardships of life." He referred to him as "my glorious & beloved Frank Huger." Huger was born in South Carolina, the son of Confederate Major General Benjamin Huger. He was West Point trained and a classmate of George Armstrong Custer.

As Lieutenant Colonel Huger (pronounced "Yew-gee") spurred his artillery train forward to follow General William Mahone's Division, climbing the hill out of the valley of Sailor's Creek, General Custer's cavalry thundered toward the Confederates. Surprised, only two 12-pound Napoleons guns of Captain Osmund B. Talyor's battery were able to quickly unlimber and fire two rounds each of canister before Custer's horsemen swarmed around the section.

Colonel Huger was among Taylor's guns where he quickly dismounted and with his revolver shot the horse of a Yankee corporal who charged him. With a second shot Huger shot a Yankee major who was following the corporal in the cheek. Huger stood his ground and manfully emptied his pistol before attempting to flee for the safety of some bushes. Before Huger could make it to the concealment of the vegetation, another trooper in blue rode up, pointed his carbine at the Colonel's head, and said, "Surrender, damn you!" The Colonel complied.

Now a prisoner of war, Huger was stripped of his side-arms and possessions, including his hat and toothbrush. He asked the Union cavalryman for his toothbrush back, but the Federal threw it to the ground and stomped on it. As Huger was being moved to the rear with other Confederate prisoners, he was spotted by General Custer. Custer recognized Huger from their days together at West Point where they had been friends and called out to him to get out of line and accompany him, telling the guard that he, Custer, would be responsible for the prisoner. (1)

That night the two West Pointers renewed acquaintances. They were joined by Major General Joseph Kershaw, who also had been captured earlier that day by Corporal Lanham, 2nd Ohio Cavalry. Kershaw had requested when captured to be brought to General Custer to whom he wished to present his sword in surrender. While the corporal led Kershaw towards Custer's headquarters, an officer demanded Kershaw's sword

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and the corporal could not protest and Kershaw was forced to relinquish it. Arriving at Custer's Headquarters, Kershaw watched as Lanham spoke to an officer sitting on the trail of a cannon. The officer stood up and introduced himself as Lieutenant Carle A. Woodruff of Battery B&L 2nd US Artillery. "This is Headquarters," Woodruff explained. "The General will soon be here. In the meantime, I will take pleasure in entertaining you."

When Custer and Huger arrived, the General and his Confederate guests companionably ate at the same table "enjoying luxuries of coffee, sugar, condensed milk, hardtack, and broiled ham spread on a tent fly converted into a tablecloth." Dinner was followed with a smoke around Custer's campfire as they reminisced about the day's fighting, past battles and days spent at West Point. It was then Kershaw related the story of his sword to Custer. Kershaw told Custer that if anybody deserved the sword, other than Custer, of course, it was Corporal Lanham. (2)

Knowing in the morning that Custer would be moving on to pursue Lee's army while they would be marched with the other Confederate prisoners to the rear, Colonel Huger unstrapped a pair of spurs from the heels of his boots and gave them to Custer, telling him to wear them and to return them to him when the war was ended. (One disparaging account gave another view. It stated that Custer took the spurs and that he entertained the Confederate officers to display his own superiority. Still another said that Huger lost the spurs to Custer during their West Point days in a dice game. Rumor had it that Huger thought Custer had used loaded dice.) Kershaw did the same, giving his spurs, along with his horse, to artilleryman Lieutenant Woodruff in thanks for his kind treatment. Both Confederates felt it was better to give their spurs to friends than to have them taken later by strangers. (3)

Kershaw's spurs were a splendid pair that he had captured at Manassas. Huger's spurs were made of steel and gold with a pattern engraved on the gold band on the outside of the spur. The rowel was round and the axle had a floral pattern on each side. The rowel was described as a multi-spoke wheel in petal flora hubs. They had been given to Frank by his father, Major General Benjamin Huger. The elder Huger had received them in the war against Mexico. On surrendering Mexico City to the Americans, General Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna, conqueror of the Alamo, presented his sword to General Winfield Scott. Scott returned Santa Anna's sword, and in gratitude, the Mexican General took the spurs off his boots and gave them to Scott. Scott, in turn, presented them to then Captain Benjamin Huger, his chief of ordnance and artillery, for his heroism on many a battlefield. The elder Huger gave them to Frank when he graduated from West Point in 1860. (4)

Custer and his prisoners slept together under the stars and shared the blankets. The next morning with the sun shining, Custer gave his guests a cheery greeting as they stood around his campfire drinking coffee. As the men talked, Custer was busy receiving and sending many communications.

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The major who Huger had shot the previous day suddenly appeared. With his face sewn up and bandaged, he shook Huger 's hand and expressed sincere thanks for the glorious furlough he was about to enjoy.

Soon thirty mounted troopers rode up, each carrying a Confederate battle flag that had been captured the day before. They dismounted and a photographer took a tintype “. . . of two rows of officers and soldiers holding in their hands the lances bearing the thirty-seven battle flags”. Kershaw asked Custer what this was and Custer replied, “That is my escort for the day. It is my custom after battle to select for my escort a sort of garde de honneur - those men of each regiment who most distinguished themselves in action, bearing for the time, the trophies which they have taken from the enemy. These men are selected as the captors of the flags which they bear.” Looking at the rows, Kershaw's eyes caught the eye of Corporal Lanham who gave the General a slight bow of the head and pointed with pride at Kershaw's sword that hung at his belt. How Lanham got Kershaw's sword we may never know. It could have been Custer, who after hearing Kershaw's tale, had ordered to find the officer who had demanded the Kershaw's sword and given it to Lanham.

With that Custer shook hands with his captives telling them that horses would be brought for them, and they would be conducted to Burkesville. The General mounted his horse and proudly road away followed by his escort toward Appomattox Court House. (5)

Ten years later Lieutenant Woodruff returned the spurs to General Kershaw. After the war while Custer was out west he wrote to Huger asking permission to keep his spurs a little longer. To this Huger agreed. Then came that fateful day in Montana along the Little Bighorn. Custer was wearing the Huger-Santa Anna spurs when he lost his life. When his body was recovered only one of the spurs was found and given to Mrs. Custer along with the rest of the Colonel's private possessions. It was 20 years after the Civil War when Mrs. Custer finally returned the spur to Frank Huger who was then an executive with the Norfolk & Western Railroad and resided in Roanoke, Virginia. For many years Huger proudly displayed the spur along with a “beautiful letter” from Mrs. Custer on his library wall. In time the spur was given to Huger's granddaughter, eventually making its way to the Virginia Historical Society where it is known as “the Huger Spur.” (6)

But whatever happened to Kershaw's sword? Three places claim that they have it. One is the National Civil War Museum in Harrisburg Pennsylvania. Another is the South Carolina Confederate Relic Room and Military Museum on Gervis Street in Columbia, South Carolina. The third is an unknown dealer in Southampton, Pennsylvania who claims he purchased the sword at a relic show and is offering on-line to sell it for \$15,000. Many generals during the Civil War had more than one sword – for battle and for dress parade. Who has Kershaw's sword that was given to Corporal Lanham is anyone's guess.

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"We Ride A Whirlwind"

By Eric J. Wittenberg

Book Review by Paul Siedel

Several weeks ago author and historian Eric Wittenberg spoke to the Cleveland Civil War Round Table. His talk on Jeb Stuart at Gettysburg was one of the more memorable ones. During the evening I purchased several of his books and I must say it was money well spent. I couldn't wait to get home and begin reading one of his works called "We Ride A Whirlwind". It is the story of the Johnston-Sherman negotiations and the final surrender of Confederate forces at the Bennett farm near Durham, North Carolina.

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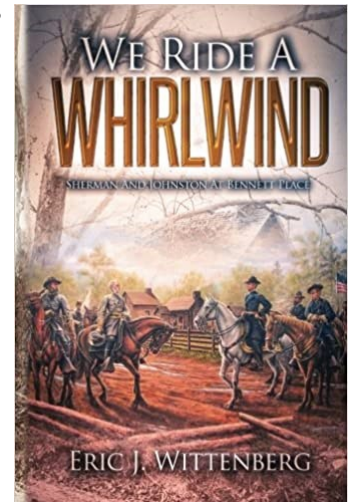
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Whirlwind cont.

Mr. Wittenberg points out that not much attention is paid to the surrender at Durham, and the reconstructed Bennett house is a small state park compared to the huge Appomattox National Historic Site up in Virginia. The Surrender at Durham Station actually brought about the surrender of more rebel troops than the surrender that occurred at Appomattox Court House. All Confederate troops in North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia and Florida were affected, and although Richard Taylor and Forrest among others were still at large, the bulk of the Confederate Armies were subdued by the surrender of General Joseph Johnston signed on April 26, 1865. The author mentions that there were actually three meetings between Sherman and Johnston. The surrender terms were actually signed at the second and finally the third meeting, the terms being drawn up by General Slocum. Secretary of War and former Vice President John Breckenridge also attended, and his ordeal is a story in itself, as he was one of only two Confederate cabinet members who made a successful escape through Florida to Cuba. Also mentioned was the animosity between General Wade Hampton and General Judson Kilpatrick which became evident at the first meeting, while they waited for Sherman and Johnston to wrap their business inside. It seems that Hampton resented the fact that Sherman blamed him for the burning of Columbia.



The book begins with the start of the Carolina Campaign on February 1, 1865. Several wings of Sherman's Army made their way up through South Carolina under such famous names as Slocum, Howard, Jacob Cox, and Judson Kilpatrick. They met the Confederates at Aversboro and Bentonville, and finally entered Goldsboro and then Raleigh. The Rebels were strung out along the roads between Hillsborough, Durham Station and Greensboro with the cavalry at Chapel Hill. This was the situation when Lincoln was assassinated on Good Friday. The story goes on to describe the efforts Sherman and his officers took to prevent the army from unleashing a firestorm on North Carolina after they heard of Lincoln's murder. The author also describes the tremendous amount of animosity that developed between General Sherman and Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton. According to several sources, Mr. Stanton didn't just nullify many of Sherman's surrender terms, he also attacked his integrity, and professionalism. Stanton's criticisms hit the national newspapers before Sherman actually became aware of them. This brought about a rift that lasted until Stanton died, a story in itself. Mr. Wittenberg also goes into great lengths describing the conference aboard "The River Queen" between Lincoln, Grant, Porter, and Sherman. After all seemed to be settled and the armies were making their ways home several letters were exchanged between Jefferson Davis, who at this time was on the run through South Carolina, and Joseph Johnston. These interesting letters are included in the appendix at the end of the book. Also included at the back of the book is the story of General Wade Hampton who decided to escort Davis through to Texas instead of surrendering. However he changed his mind when he found out that Johnston had included his cavalry unit in the surrender terms. Hampton adjusted to the new regime and eventually went on to be an all inclusive (racially speaking) governor and senator from South Carolina. One of the lessons one can take from the story of Hampton is that people can and do change during their lives. He certainly did. To say that this book is well researched and fills a long felt need in Civil War history is an understatement. Mr. Wittenberg has done a remarkable job of explaining the situation that prevailed and nevertheless keeps the book readable and interesting.

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The letters which he uses as sources are all highlighted in dark type, so the book can actually be used as a reference work when studying the situation. He departs from the actual subject matter when he describes the origin of Durham Station and how it differs from the present day state park. Complete with maps and photos of the prominent players in this drama, it is easy to follow and well presented for folks who are not familiar with the story. I would highly recommend "We Ride A Whirlwind" to anyone who is interested in the lesser known aspects of the Civil War and their effects on present day society. Mr. Wittenberg certainly outdid himself and his efforts are clearly visible in his book.

This publication can be purchased directly from the author or ordered through Amazon, The American Book Exchange, or any local book store.

Wittenberg, Eric J.

"We Ride A Whirlwind" Burlington, N.C. Fox Run Publishing LLC.

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The Near Capture of Ulysses Grant by Confederate General Jackson

by David A. Carrino

Perhaps the two most intriguing words in history are "What if?" This is true whether the word "history" is used in the context of the past, itself, or in the context of the study of the past. In the latter context, "What if?" leads to interesting, enjoyable, thought-provoking, and sometimes intense discussions. When people who are interested in history concoct alternative histories based on some event happening differently (i.e., a what-if), the discussions that follow are one of the things that contribute to people's interest in history. In the former context, a real-life what-if strategically placed into the past (if such a thing were possible) could, as George Bailey learned, produce a substantially different present than the one in which we now live, and this is a significant reason for those interesting, enjoyable, thought-provoking, and sometimes intense discussions when "What if?" is inserted into the study of the past.

Wars, because of their capricious nature, are arguably one of the most fertile fields in history for what-ifs, and the Civil War is no exception. A change in one event can produce a significant change in the course or even the outcome of a war. What if Robert E. Lee had given his services to the Union military effort? What if the Army of Northern Virginia had been victorious at the Battle of Gettysburg? (This was the subject of the annual Dick Crews debate at the January 2019 Roundtable meeting.) What if Atlanta had not fallen prior to the presidential election of 1864, with the result that Abraham Lincoln's fears about that election came to pass, and war-weary Northerners elected George McClellan president? In one of the most frequently discussed what-ifs about the Civil War, what if Stonewall Jackson had not been taken away from the Confederacy shortly after the Battle of Chancellorsville? This last what-if involves the elimination of a major loss from the Confederacy's war effort. Subtractions such as the one caused by Stonewall's death are always a possibility in an enterprise like war. . As Confederate C, "War means fighting, and fighting means killing." When there is killing going on, sometimes that killing befalls someone whose removal is so significant that that person becomes the subject of a future what-if.

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The Confederate army had its share of significant losses among its high-ranking commanders. Stonewall Jackson was certainly the most significant, but there were also Albert Sydney Johnston, Jeb Stuart, Patrick Cleburne, A.P. Hill, and Leonidas Polk. Some of the significant losses among high-ranking commanders in the Union army were James McPherson, John Reynolds, and John Sedgewick, although there was no subtraction on the Union side comparable to Stonewall Jackson. But what if there had been, if not by death, then by capture? One such potential subtraction was Ulysses Grant who was almost captured by the Confederates in June 1862. By Grant's own estimation, this was not something that could have happened, but something that very nearly happened. How would the Union's war effort have been affected by the loss of Grant? What would have been the fate of Vicksburg if Grant had not been available to lead the campaign to capture the Gibraltar of the Confederacy? Where would Abraham Lincoln have looked for an overall commander of the Union army if he no longer had access to the one officer whom Lincoln said he "can't spare" because "he fights"? In other words, what if Grant had been subtracted from the Union's war effort? This almost happened when the Civil War was only 30% toward its eventual end, and Grant, himself, wrote about it in his *Memoirs*.

In Chapter XXVII of his *Memoirs*, Grant wrote about an incident that occurred on June 23, 1862 while he and a small party were riding from La Grange, Tennessee to Memphis, Tennessee after Grant had moved his headquarters to Memphis. In Grant's words, "The 23d of June, 1862, on the road from La Grange to Memphis was very warm, even for that latitude and season. With my staff and small escort I started at an early hour, and before noon we arrived within twenty miles of Memphis. At this point I saw a very comfortable-looking white-haired gentleman seated at the front of his house, a little distance from the road. I let my staff and escort ride ahead while I halted and, for an excuse, asked for a glass of water. I was invited at once to dismount and come in. I found my host very genial and communicative, and staid longer than I had intended, until the lady of the house announced dinner and asked me to join them. The host, however, was not pressing, so that I declined the invitation and, mounting my horse, rode on.

"About a mile west from where I had been stopping a road comes up from the southeast, joining that from La Grange to Memphis. A mile west of this junction I found my staff and escort halted and enjoying the shade of forest trees on the lawn of a house located several hundred feet back from the road, their horses hitched to the fence along the line of the road. I, too, stopped and we remained there until the cool of the afternoon, and then rode into Memphis.

"The gentleman with whom I had stopped twenty miles from Memphis was a Mr. De Loche, a man loyal to the Union. He had not pressed me to tarry longer with him because in the early part of my visit a neighbor, a Dr. Smith, had called and, on being presented to me, backed off the porch as if something had hit him. Mr. De Loche knew that the rebel General Jackson was in that neighborhood with a detachment of cavalry. His neighbor was as earnest in the southern cause as was Mr. De Loche in that of the Union. The exact location of Jackson was entirely unknown to Mr. De Loche, but he was sure that his neighbor would know it and would give information of my presence, and this made my stay unpleasant to him after the call of Dr. Smith.

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“ I have stated that a detachment of troops was engaged in guarding workmen who were repairing the railroad east of Memphis. On the day I entered Memphis, Jackson captured a small herd of beef cattle which had been sent east for the troops so engaged. The drovers were not enlisted men and he released them. A day or two after one of these drovers came to my headquarters and, relating the circumstances of his capture, said Jackson was very much disappointed that he had not captured me; that he was six or seven miles south of the Memphis and Charleston railroad when he learned that I was stopping at the house of Mr. De Loche, and had ridden with his command to the junction of the road he was on with that from La Grange to Memphis, where he learned that I had passed three-quarters of an hour before. He thought it would be useless to pursue with jaded horses a well-mounted party with so much of a start. Had he gone three-quarters of a mile farther he would have found me with my party quietly resting under the shade of trees and without even arms in our hands with which to defend ourselves.”

In other words, Grant was in the process of riding to Memphis when he stopped at the house of a Union sympathizer. While Grant was at the house, his presence became known to a Confederate sympathizer, who, evidently, made Grant's presence known to Confederate General Jackson. Jackson pursued Grant and his party, but, because Jackson thought that he would not be able to overtake them, he gave up the pursuit when he was just three-quarters of a mile from Grant's location, where Grant and his party were not riding further, but were resting in the shade. Grant was completely vulnerable to capture by Jackson and avoided capture only because Jackson gave up the pursuit. It was a momentous near-miss, a what-if that would have had substantial far-reaching consequences for the Union.

Who was this General Jackson who nearly captured Ulysses Grant? When Civil War enthusiasts hear the words "General Jackson," the first person they think of is Thomas J. (Stonewall) Jackson. In Chapter XXVII of his *Memoirs*, when Grant describes his near capture, he mentions the General Jackson who almost captured him seven times, but nowhere in his *Memoirs* does Grant give this General Jackson's first name. Who, then, was this General Jackson? On June 23, 1862 Stonewall Jackson was 700 miles from Memphis in Virginia and in the process of being assimilated into Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia after Stonewall had led his brilliant and highly successful Shenandoah Valley Campaign. Thus, unless Stonewall, mythical as he was, had access to some sort of rapid transportation that did not exist in 1862, Stonewall Jackson could not have been the General Jackson who nearly captured Ulysses Grant. And he wasn't. The General Jackson who almost made a prisoner of war out of Ulysses Grant was William Hicks Jackson.

William Hicks Jackson was born on October 1, 1835 in Paris, Tennessee, which is about 90 miles west of Nashville and now has a 70-foot replica of the Eiffel Tower in it. Jackson graduated from West Point in 1856, number 38 in a class of 49. For comparison, the much more famous General Jackson, namely Stonewall, graduated number 17 out of 59 in his Class of 1846. One of William Hicks Jackson's classmates was Fitzhugh Lee, the nephew of Robert E. Lee, who was a cavalry general in the Army of Northern Virginia, and who, at number 45, graduated even lower than William Hicks Jackson in the Class of 1856. After graduation, Jackson the lesser served in the western frontier and participated in fighting against Native Americans.

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On May 16, 1861 Jackson resigned from the U.S. army and received a commission in the Confederate army as a captain of artillery. He fought in the Battle of Belmont, where he opposed a Union army under the command of the person whom he almost captured later in the war. Jackson was seriously wounded in this battle when a minie ball struck him in the right side, and he carried that minie ball inside him for the rest of his life. Upon his return to action five months later, he was appointed colonel of the 1st Tennessee Cavalry. By year's end he was promoted to brigadier general and, hence, became General Jackson, although he held the rank of colonel at the time that he nearly had a fateful encounter with Ulysses Grant.

Jackson later commanded a cavalry division under Joseph E. Johnston, first in the Vicksburg Campaign and then in the Atlanta Campaign. Jackson remained in that role after John Bell Hood replaced Johnston, and he participated in Hood's disastrous campaign into Jackson's native Tennessee. He then served under Nathan Bedford Forrest in the paltry force that opposed the spring 1865 raid through the South that was led by James Wilson. The war ended for Jackson on May 9, 1865 at Gainesville, Alabama when Forrest surrendered, after which Forrest told his men in his final order, "I have never, on the field of battle, sent you where I was unwilling to go myself; nor would I now advise you to a course which I felt myself unwilling to pursue. You have been good soldiers, you can be good citizens. Obey the laws, preserve your honor, and the Government to which you have surrendered can afford to be, and will be, magnanimous." It can be argued that Forrest did not heed his own words, but Jackson followed Forrest's advice, as Jackson's post-war life demonstrated.

Jackson married Selene Harding in 1868. Selene's father, William Giles Harding, was the owner of Belle Meade Plantation near Nashville, Tennessee. Harding had an interesting Civil War connection in that his second wife, Elizabeth Irwin McGavock, was the daughter of Randal McGavock, the owner of Carnton Plantation in Nashville, Tennessee. It was on the back porch of Carnton House that the bodies of four dead Confederate generals were laid after the Battle of Franklin, including Patrick Cleburne and Ohio-born Otto Strahl. Although Harding was not part of the Confederate military in the Civil War, he became a prisoner of war when Union forces occupied Nashville in 1862. Harding, who had donated \$500,000 to the Confederate army, was a wealthy and prominent civilian official in the Confederate government in Tennessee, which led to his arrest and six-month imprisonment on Mackinac Island in Michigan.

After the 1868 marriage of William Hicks Jackson to Selene Harding, Jackson worked with his father-in-law in the management of Belle Meade, where they became proficient and renowned in breeding horses. A number of prominent people visited Belle Meade, including President and Mrs. Grover Cleveland and Robert Todd Lincoln. In 1874 William Hicks Jackson's older brother, Howell Edmunds Jackson, married Mary Harding, the younger sister of William Hicks Jackson's wife, Selene (which made William Hicks Jackson and Howell Edmunds Jackson not only brothers, but also brothers-in-law). After the death of William Giles Harding in 1886, the brothers Jackson co-managed Belle Meade, which became very well-known for breeding and raising horses. The elder Jackson brother, who had been a U.S. senator and a judge between 1881 and 1893 eventually became a justice of the U.S. Supreme Court and served for over two years until his death in 1895. The younger Jackson brother died in 1903 at Belle Meade. The grandson of William Hicks Jackson, William Harding Jackson, served as deputy director of the Central Intelligence Agency, which means there is a connection between the near capture of Ulysses Grant and U.S. espionage. How much better would have been William Hicks Jackson's chances of capturing Ulysses Grant had Jackson had access to the surveillance resources available to his grandson rather than just the information from the neighbor of the house where Grant stopped for a drink of water on a hot Tennessee day?

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Grant's near capture by William Hicks Jackson was not the only time that Grant came close to being subtracted from the Union war effort. Grant recorded in his *Memoirs* a number of times when this almost happened, and each one of these constitutes another what-if involving the loss of Ulysses Grant. Two of the better known incidents are his narrow escape at the close of the Battle of Belmont and his nearly being struck by a bullet at the Battle of Shiloh. In the former, Grant related (Chapter XX) that after the Confederates overran the Union position and the Union troops retreated, almost all of the Union troops had boarded transports on the Mississippi River, but Grant was still on the battlefield. When Grant became aware that, as he wrote, "I was the only man of the National army between the rebels and our transports," he rode toward those transports, but the transports had already pushed off. Fortunately, the "captain of a boat that had just pushed out...recognized me" and "had a plank run out for me. My horse seemed to take in the situation...My horse put his fore feet over the bank without hesitation or urging, and with his hind feet well under him, slid down the bank and trotted aboard the boat, twelve or fifteen feet away, over a single gang plank." In this instance, Grant was saved from capture in part by the remarkable agility of his horse.

In the incident at Shiloh, Grant wrote in his *Memoirs* (Chapter XXV) that on the battle's second day, "I had been moving from right to left and back, to see for myself the progress made. In the early part of the afternoon, while riding with Colonel McPherson and Major Hawkins, then my chief commissary, we got beyond the left of our troops. We were moving along the northern edge of a clearing, very leisurely, toward the river above the landing. There did not appear to be an enemy to our right, until suddenly a battery with musketry opened upon us from the edge of the woods on the other side of the clearing. The shells and balls whistled about our ears very fast for about a minute. I do not think it took us longer than that to get out of range and out of sight." When the three men were in safety, they assessed their condition and found that "Major Hawkins lost his hat," and McPherson's horse had been struck by a bullet "forward of the flank just back of the saddle" and soon thereafter "the poor beast dropped dead." McPherson was not struck, but a little over two years later at Atlanta, he was not so lucky. As for Grant, "A ball had struck the metal scabbard of my sword, just below the hilt, and broken it nearly off." Before the battle ended, the scabbard "had broken off entirely." Grant lost his scabbard, but he, and the Union army, came very close to losing much more than that. Grant very nearly joined Albert Sydney Johnston in the afterlife, which would have thereby distinguished the Battle of Shiloh as one in which the commanders of both opposing armies lost their lives.

Grant recorded other near misses in his *Memoirs*. At the aforementioned Battle of Belmont, after Grant's horse managed to carry its rider along the plank and onto the departing transport boat, Grant recounted (Chapter XX) that he went into the captain's room "and threw myself onto the sofa." He remained there only a short time before going out "on the deck to observe what was going on. I had scarcely left when a musket ball entered the room, struck the head of the sofa, passed through it and lodged in the foot." Grant related another near miss when he was at Chattanooga (Chapter XLI). In Grant's words, prior to the Battle of Chattanooga, when the two armies were facing each other, "The most friendly relations seemed to exist between the two armies. At one place there was a tree which had fallen across the stream, and which was used in drawing water for their camps." Grant indicated that some of the Confederate soldiers "wore blue of a little different shade from our uniform. Seeing a soldier in blue on this log, I rode up to him, commenced conversing with him, and asked what corps he belonged to," whereupon the soldier made clear from his reply that he was in the enemy's army. Grant continued, "I asked him a few questions—but not with a view of gaining any particular information—all of which he answered, and I rode off." It is frightful to imagine the

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man who was arguably the most important person for the Union war effort exposing himself to danger by fraternizing unknowingly with an enemy soldier.

Later in the war, after Grant had come east to direct the operations of the Army of the Potomac, Grant wrote (Chapter XLVII) that he regularly took a train to Washington "to confer with the Secretary of War and the President." On one of these train trips back to Virginia, "a heavy cloud of dust was seen to the east of the road as if made by a body of cavalry." When the train reached the next station and stopped, those on board asked the "man at the station" about this, and "he informed us that (John) Mosby had crossed a few minutes before at full speed in pursuit of Federal cavalry. Had he seen our train coming, no doubt he would have let his prisoners escape to capture the train. I was on a special train, if I remember correctly, without any guard." About a month later, when Grant had ordered the southward movement of the Army of the Potomac after the Battle of the Wilderness, Grant began to move with the army. Grant recorded (Chapter LI), "With my staff and a small escort of cavalry I preceded the troops. Meade with his staff accompanied me... We had passed but a little way beyond our left when the road forked. We looked to see, if we could, which road Sheridan had taken with his cavalry during the day. It seemed to be the right-hand one, and accordingly we took it. We had not gone far, however, when Colonel C.B. Comstock, of my staff, with the instinct of the engineer, suspecting that we were on a road that would lead us into the lines of the enemy, if he, too, should be moving, dashed by at a rapid gallop and all alone. In a few minutes he returned and reported that Lee was moving, and that the road we were on would bring us into his lines in a short distance." What if Colonel Comstock had not succumbed to "the instinct of the engineer," but had simply assumed that Grant's party, which included Meade, had chosen the correct road at the fork, and Comstock had not bothered to expend the effort required to check the route that Grant's party was taking? Would there have been any benefit to Robert E. Lee by having the Army of the Potomac's high command ride into his lines?

While all of these wartime near misses involving Ulysses Grant certainly could have affected the course of the war had they not gone favorably for the Union, there was a possibility that Grant could have missed the war entirely because of a bureaucratic blunder. Grant related in his *Memoirs* (Chapter XVII) that very early in the war he sent a letter offering his services and requesting reinstatement in the army. However, as Grant wrote, "This letter failed to elicit an answer from the Adjutant General of the Army." Years later Grant learned the fate of his letter. As he recorded in his *Memoirs*, "Subsequent to the war General Badeau having heard of this letter applied to the War Department for a copy of it. The letter could not be found and no one recollected ever having seen it... Long after the application of General Badeau, General Townsend, who had become Adjutant General of the Army, while packing up papers preparatory to the removal of his office, found this letter in some out-of-the-way place. It had not been destroyed, but it had not been regularly filed away." It is unfathomable for Civil War enthusiasts, knowing the utmost importance of Ulysses Grant to the Union victory, to think of Grant sitting out the Civil War because his letter offering his services to the Union army was misplaced. Fortunately for the United States, Grant did find his way into the Union army. Nevertheless, each of the near misses described above represents a what-if in which Grant's services could have been lost to the Union war effort, which could have changed the course of the Civil War significantly if not substantially

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What if William Hicks Jackson had captured Ulysses Grant on June 23, 1862? How would subsequent events in the Civil War have been altered by the subtraction of Grant from the Union army? This speculation is left to those interesting, enjoyable, thought-provoking, and sometimes intense discussions among Civil War enthusiasts. Grant wrote in his *Memoirs* (Chapter LXVII), "Wars produce many stories of fiction, some of which are told until they are believed to be true," and there is abundant evidence to prove that Grant's statement is accurate. Similarly, post-war discussions in which wartime events are closely analyzed likewise "produce many stories of fiction." But in this case, many of these "stories of fiction" are what-ifs that include alternative histories based on some change in a particular wartime event, such as the capture of Ulysses Grant by William Hicks Jackson.

One thing about the near capture of Grant by Jackson can be stated with certainty, because Grant wrote it in his *Memoirs*. Grant related a post-war encounter with the man who almost captured him and stated (Chapter XXVII), "I never met General Jackson before the war, nor during it, but have met him since at his very comfortable summer home at Manitou Springs, Colorado. I reminded him of the above incident (i.e., Jackson's near capture of Grant), and this drew from him the response that he was thankful now he had not captured me." Grant did not recount if Jackson gave a reason that he was thankful he did not capture Grant. Perhaps post-war reflection led Jackson to reconsider the cause for which he fought and to realize that, as Grant asserted in his *Memoirs* (Chapter LXVII) "that cause was, I believe, [one of the worst for which a people ever fought](#), and one for which there was the least excuse." Maybe Jackson was grateful that he did not capture Grant because he came to realize that Grant's capture may have led to a favorable outcome in the war for the Confederacy, and that a favorable outcome for the Confederacy, in spite of Jackson's choice for wartime loyalty, was less desirable for everyone involved in the war, both Union and Confederate.

In light of Grant's opinion about the Confederate cause and its disastrous objective of dissolving the Union, it is not surprising that Grant predicted that there almost certainly would never again be a movement in his reunited country that would resort to civil war in order to attain its objectives. Grant wrote (Conclusion), "There can scarcely be a possible chance of a conflict, such as the last one, occurring among our own people again." The wording of Grant's prediction is interesting. When Grant made his prediction that another civil war in the United States was extremely unlikely, he did so not in the impersonal and more abstract context of a civil war happening again in the nation, but of it "occurring among our own people again." Implicit in Grant's wording is the fact that it is not from a nation that a civil war arises, but from people, people who feel vehemently discontented and aggrieved and who do not see any possibility for relief via a less severe option.

Obviously, Grant could not foresee America of the 21st century and consider how that America and the people living in that America compare to the nation and the people that he knew in America of the late 19th century at the time that he made his prediction. But what if Ulysses Grant could see what is happening nowadays in the country that he was instrumental in saving? After Grant witnessed the turbulence of the pre-Civil War years, such as the actions taken by some vehemently discontented people in Harpers Ferry in October 1859, what would he think if he had seen the actions taken by some vehemently discontented people at the U.S. Capitol on January 6, 2021? After seeing what happened in Kansas beginning in the mid-1850s, what would Grant think if he saw what happened in Charlottesville, Virginia in August 2017 and

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realized that what happened there was precipitated by some vehemently discontented people over the removal of a monument to one of the leading figures who fought against the United States for the cause that Grant called "one of the worst for which a people ever fought"? After hearing the fire-eaters of the pre-Civil War South and observing what they did after the presidential election of 1860, what would Grant think if he read what was written by Stewart Rhodes, the founder of the Oath Keepers, a group that participated in the storming of the U.S. Capitol on January 6, 2021, who stated that unless measures were taken to redo the 2020 presidential election, "we the people will have to fight a bloody revolution/civil war"? Grant maintained that there is only a scarce chance of "a conflict, such as the last one, occurring among our own people again," and his prediction has held up for over 150 years. What if there is an expiration date on Grant's prediction?

Emancipation Highway, a Note from Dennis Keating

At the urging of activists and some Virginia cities through which it passes, on March 30, 2021, the Virginia General Assembly passed a bill renaming parts of U.S. Route 1 - the Jefferson Davis Highway - to "Emancipation Highway." This took effect on January 1, 2022. While not all of these cities adopted this, an example is Fredericksburg, site of the bloody December, 1862 Union defeat. On July 14, 2020, its City Council urged the state legislature to replace the name "with a name that promotes shared values of unity, equality, and a commitment to a better future for all Americans." <https://www.fredericksburgva.gov/1775/Renaming-Jefferson-Davis-Highway>

[Renaming Jefferson Davis Highway to Emancipation Highway | Fredericksburg, VA - Official Website](#)

As of January 1, 2022, the section of U.S. Route 1 in the city limits will be renamed Emancipation Highway. Street addresses with Jefferson Davis Hwy or Jeff Davis Highway that have 22401 zip codes will also be changing.

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Meeting Jan. 12, 2022

Program : Dick Crews Annual Debate Which Civil War general (excluding Grant and Lee) or flag officer subjected to discipline by superiors during the war, deserved it the least?

Speaker: A panel of four knowledgeable and articulate debaters who can keep time

Location: The Holiday Inn Independence at Rockside Road just off I-77

Time: 6pm

The talk will be both in-person and streamed live so that as many Civil War enthusiasts can enjoy our program.

For reservations go to: ccwrtreserve@gmail.com or call, 440-449-9311

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