

THE MINIE BALL GAZETTE

LOWCOUNTRY CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE

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Dedicated to historic preservation and enlightenment

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ISSUE 001

NEWS FLASH ----

FOR SEPTEMBER MEETING...

Members, please bring as many guests as you want for the special event. The only cost is dinner \$10/p.p. To reserve, please call 705-9898.

LOWCOUNTRY CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE SINKS ROOTS NEAR SECESSION OAK

A band of newly-entrenched northerners located in Sun City Hilton Head has united with core members of the illustrious but now defunct Hilton Head Civil War Roundtable. Together, they have formed a new organization, the Lowcountry Civil War Roundtable.

Bluffton is their meeting place, and how fitting, because according to local folklore, in 1861 the decision to secede from the nation took place beneath the lofty limbs of an oak tree located somewhere in Bluffton.

During the Civil War, Bluffton was a bustling, flourishing little town. The May River, flowing nearby, served as a shipping lane for merchants and visitors. Homes stand along the peaceful river that once hosted guests from far and wide, seeking to escape the sultry heat of inland areas.

If you care to visit the secession oak, take U.S. Highway 278 to S.C. #46, turn right at the four-way stop sign, turn left at Calhoun Street and STOP. You have reached the one and one-half mile square historic downtown section.

Once there, ask any local to direct you to the famous tree. You'll probably be told, "It's down that road a piece," or "It's down by the river, across from the Church of the Cross."

The tree's actual whereabouts seem to be a well-guarded secret. Whether the townsfolk wish to protect the oak from nosy marauders or whether the tree exists within the mythological fabric of the town, I don't know. But if you do find it, please let me know its location. I've been searching for the past two years.

Carol Cutrona

A SALUTE TO THE C.S.S. HUNLEY

For one hundred and thirty six years the C.S.S. Hunley, also known as the "Diver", rested quietly with its nine-man crew on the floor of Charleston Harbor, entombed for all eternity. Or so everyone thought.

Thanks to the ceaseless endeavors of a few, contributions from many and modern engineering, the C.S.S. Hunley has been raised and now rests in a marine laboratory in North Charleston. Some time in the future, we landlubbers will be able to view her. Someday all of her secrets will be revealed.

In the meantime, the Lowcountry Civil War Roundtable salutes this historic event by hosting a kick-off dinner meeting September 13th. State Senator Glenn McConnell, Chairman of the Hunley Commission, will speak, enlightening members and guests on this momentous occasion with a slide and video presentation.

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Senator McConnell was graduated from the College of Charleston in 1969 and from USC Law School in 1972. His memberships in various groups are too numerous to mention here. Senator McConnell has been named SENATOR OF THE YEAR and LEGISLATOR OF THE YEAR by many associations. He has chaired an impressive number of legislative committees. He is a member of Sons of Confederate Veterans, the S.C. Battleground Preservation Trust, S.C. Palmetto Battalion, Southern Heritage Association and the Twenty-seventh S.C. Charleston Light Infantry. He comes well equipped to head the Hunley Commission.

"General" Mac McCoy will serve as Officer of the Day for both the month of September and the meeting on the 13th.

We will meet at Bluffton's McCracken Middle School at 5:30 p.m. for a cool drink (no alcoholic beverages allowed), at 6:00 for dinner and 7:00 for the speaker. Make reservations for the meeting and dinner by calling (843) 705-9898 by September 11, 2000. See page 4 for the menu. A charge of \$10 covers meal and gratuities. Tell your friends!

CAMP GOSSIP

Rumor has it that on October 11th General Robert E. Lee (portrayed by James Mack Adams) will emerge from history and tell us about his life in Savannah before and after the war.

Make your reservations for the talk and/or dinner by calling (843) 705-9898.

MAIL CALL

Bob Eberly

The Civil War has been called America's most literary war. From generals, to common soldiers,

to the families they left at home, a remarkable number of people wrote letters in which they described the stirring events of the day and the part that they played in them. In this regular column we will present a potpourri of letters, from Yankee and Rebel alike, giving voice to the full range of emotions that enveloped the North and South during the war that shaped the country we live in today. In this first Mail Call, we will focus on the home front, on the hopes and fears of those left behind as their fathers and sons went off to war.

Mary Lewis was a seventeen year-old schoolgirl when her father, Andrew, enlisted in the Pennsylvania Reserves in June of 1861.

*Ebensburg, Pennsylvania
August 13, 1861*

Dear Father,

As this is the first time I hav ever wrote and as I think for my first beginning I cant find one more worthy than my one dear Papa. I will attempt to scribble a few lins to let you know that we are all well at least as far as helth is conserned. But our minds are never easy on your account nor never will be until your safe return. Dear papa it is so loansom here with out you. O when will this dredfull war be over and when will we have you home with us never to leave us again.

All our friends here sends love to you. We are so sory we have nothing nice to send you now. Papa I want you someday to write me a letter. Momma Jackey and myself sends love to you. And now dear Papa for to take good care of yourself is the prayer of your loving daughter Mary.

Mary F. Lewis

Captain Andrew Lewis fought with McClellan's Army of the Potomac in the Peninsular Campaign in 1862. He was seriously wounded at the Battle of Gaines' Mill and was captured and taken to

Richmond. Confederate surgeons amputated his leg, but he died July 2, 1862, in the Southern capital.

Editor's note - Mary Lewis's letter is part of a collection of letters entitled "The Civil War Letters of Captain Andrew Lewis and His Daughter", published in the *Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine*, Vol. 60 (Oct. 1977), p. 371.

MILITARY ENGAGEMENTS

September 8-10 - 11th Infantry Reenactment of Hunter's Raid and the Battle for Lynchburg (804) 821-1086

September 13 - General Meeting

September 22-24 - Reenactors at Chancellorville (888) 696-3340

October 11 - Robert E. Lee Speaks at General Meeting

October 13, 14 - Confederate Ghost Walk

October 21, 22 - Battle of Honey Hill Reenactment

November 8 - Historian at Ft. Sumter Speaks on Battle at Wilson's Creek at General Meeting.

TRIVIA

Who coined the title, "War Between the States?"
(answer given at September meeting)

THIS MONTH IN HISTORY.....

September 1, 1862 - Battle of Chantilly, Va.

September 4, 1862 - Lee's first invasion of the North begins, the Potomac River is crossed

September 13, 1862 - McClellan's troops find Lee's Lost Order

September 14, 1862 - the Battle of South Mountain

September 17, 1862 - the Battle of Antietam
September 22, 1862 - Lincoln issues Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation

A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO ...

Long before troops set forth on the trail, dreary nights are spent before a flickering candle, planning the maneuvers.

The Acting Executive Board thanks the following volunteer army enlistees for the time, input and enthusiasm they devoted toward transforming this dream into a real live Civil War Roundtable.

You know who you are, but to mention a few: Bruce Claxton, Carol Cutrona, Bob Eberly, Jack O'Donnell, Mac McCoy, Kay Oliver, Sam Sawyer, Lee Shroads, and Betty Smith.

WANTED.....

We are a new organization and welcome input from the troops either as suggestions for the club or as work submitted for this newsletter.

We especially need articles, camp gossip, women's corps news, happenings, poems, and recipes. (I'm looking for the best way to cook a river eel over a campfire) Write the article and we'll be glad to edit the work.

*Just call me or Bob or e-mail to one of us.
Thank you.*

The Staff

NEXT MEETING

Join the troops at the next meeting, October 11, when General Robert E. Lee talks of his life in Savannah during and after the Civil War.