



MINIÉ BALL GAZETTE

The Official Newsletter of the Lowcountry Civil War Round Table, Inc.

October 2020

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October 28, 2020

A Civil War Captain and His Lady: Love, Courtship and Combat from Fort Donelson through the Vicksburg Campaign

By Gene Barr

Kindle \$10.99

Hardcover \$33.98

Paperback \$22.95

Available through Amazon

A True "Cold Mountain" from the Northern Perspective

More than 150 years ago, 27-year-old Irish immigrant Josiah Moore met 19-year-old Jennie Lindsay, a member of one of Peoria, Illinois's most prominent families. The Civil War had just begun, Josiah was the captain of the 17th Illinois Infantry, and his war would be a long and bloody one. Their courtship and romance, which came to light in a rare and unpublished series of letters, forms the basis of Gene Barr's memorable *A Civil War Captain and His Lady: A True Story of Love, Courtship, and Combat*.

The story of Josiah, Jennie, the men of the 17th and their families tracks the toll on our nation during the war and allows us to explore the often difficult recovery after the last gun sounded in 1865.

Josiah's and Jennie's letters shed significant light on the important role played by a soldier's sweetheart on the home front, and a warrior's observations from the war front. Josiah's letters offer a deeply personal glimpse into army life, how he dealt with the loss of many close to him, and the effects of war on a man's physical, spiritual, and moral well-being. Jennie's letters show a young woman mature beyond her age, dealing with the difficulties on the home front while her brother and her new love struggle through the travails of war. Her encouragement to keep his faith in God strong and remain morally upright gave Josiah the strength to lead his men through the horrors of the Civil War. Politics also thread their way through the letters and include the evolution of Jennie's father's view of the conflict. A leader in the Peoria community and former member of the Illinois state house, he engages in his own political wars when he shifts his affiliation from the Whig Party to the new Republican Party, and is finally elected to the Illinois Senate as a Peace Democrat and becomes one of the state's more notorious Copperheads.

In addition to this deeply moving and often riveting correspondence, Barr includes additional previously unpublished material on the 17th Illinois and the war's Western Theater, including Fort Donelson, Shiloh, Vicksburg, and the lesser known Meridian Campaign—actions that have historically received much less attention than similar battles in the Eastern Theater. The result is a rich, complete, and satisfying story of love, danger, politics, and warfare, and it is one you won't soon forget.

Fort Donelson

The Battle of Fort Donelson was fought from February 11–16, 1862, in the Western Theater of the American Civil War. The Union capture of the Confederate fort near the Tennessee–Kentucky border opened the Cumberland River, an important avenue for the invasion of the South. The Union's success also elevated Brig. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant from an obscure and largely unproven leader to the rank of major general, and earned him the nickname of "Unconditional Surrender" Grant.

"No terms except an unconditional and immediate surrender can be accepted."

Ulysses S. Grant, February 16, 1862

The morning of February 14 dawned cold and quiet. Early in the afternoon a furious roar broke the stillness, and the earth began to shake. Andrew H. Foote's Union gunboat fleet, consisting of the ironclads *St. Louis*, *Pittsburgh*, *Louisville*, and *Carondolet*, and the timberclads *Conestoga* and *Tyler*, had arrived from Fort Henry via the Tennessee and Ohio Rivers and were exchanging "iron valentines" with the eleven big guns in the Southern water batteries. During this one and one-half hour duel the Confederates wounded Foote and inflicted such extensive damage upon the gunboats that they were forced to retreat. The hills and hollows echoed with cheers from the southern soldiers.

The Confederate generals—John Floyd, Gideon Pillow, Simon Buckner and Bushrod Johnson—also rejoiced; but sober reflection revealed another danger. Grant was receiving reinforcements daily and had extended his right flank almost to Lick Creek to complete the encirclement of the Southerners. If the Confederates did not move quickly, they would be starved into submission. Accordingly, they massed their troops against the Union right, hoping to clear a route to Nashville and safety. Both Confederate and Union soldiers fought furiously on the morning of February 15; the Union Army grudgingly retreated by the afternoon. Just as it seemed the way was clear; the Southern troops were ordered to return to their entrenchments—a result of confusion and indecision among the Confederate commanders. Grant immediately launched a vigorous counterattack, retaking most of the lost ground and gaining new positions as well. The way of escape was closed once more.

Floyd and Pillow turned over command of Fort Donelson to Buckner and slipped away to Nashville with about 2,000 men. Others followed cavalryman Col. Nathan Bedford Forrest across swollen Lick Creek. That morning, February 16, Buckner asked Grant for

terms. Grant's answer was short and direct: "No terms except an unconditional and immediate surrender can be accepted." Buckner surrendered.

Soon after the surrender, civilians and relief agencies rushed to assist the Union Army. The U.S. Sanitary Commission was one of the first to provide food, medical supplies, and hospital ships to transport the wounded. Many civilians came in search of loved ones or to offer support. Although not officially recognized as nurses, women such as Mary Bickerdyke cared for and comforted sick and wounded soldiers.

With the capture of Fort Donelson and its sister fort, Henry, the North had not only won its first great victory, it had also gained a new hero-"Unconditional Surrender" Grant, who was promoted to major general. Subsequent victories at Shiloh, Vicksburg, and Chattanooga would lead to his appointment as lieutenant general and commander of all Union Armies. Robert E. Lee's surrender at Appomattox would send Grant to the White House.

After the fall of Fort Donelson, the South was forced to give up southern Kentucky and much of Middle and West Tennessee. The Tennessee and Cumberland Rivers, and railroads in the area, became vital Federal supply lines. Nashville was developed into a huge supply depot for the Union army in the west. The heartland of the Confederacy was opened, and the Federals would press on until the "Union" became a fact once more.

Siege Vicksburg

The Siege of Vicksburg (May 18 – July 4, 1863) was the final major military action in the [Vicksburg campaign](#) of the [American Civil War](#). In a series of maneuvers, [Union Maj. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant](#) and his [Army of the Tennessee](#) crossed the [Mississippi River](#) and drove the [Confederate Army of Mississippi](#), led by [Lt. Gen. John C. Pemberton](#), into the defensive lines surrounding the fortress city of [Vicksburg, Mississippi](#).

Vicksburg was the last major [Confederate](#) stronghold on the Mississippi River; therefore, capturing it completed the second part of the Northern strategy, the [Anaconda Plan](#). When two major assaults against the Confederate fortifications, on May 19 and 22, were repulsed with heavy casualties, Grant decided to besiege the city beginning on May 25. After holding out for more than forty days, with their supplies nearly gone, the garrison surrendered on July 4. The successful ending of the [Vicksburg campaign](#) significantly degraded the ability of the Confederacy to maintain its war effort. This action, combined with the surrender of the down-river [Port Hudson](#) to Maj. Gen. [Nathaniel P. Banks](#) on July 9, yielded command of the [Mississippi River](#) to the Union forces, who would hold it for the rest of the conflict.

The Confederate surrender on July 4, 1863, is sometimes considered, when combined with Gen. [Robert E. Lee](#)'s defeat at [Gettysburg](#) by Maj. Gen. [George Meade](#) the previous day, the [turning point of the war](#). It cut off the [Trans-Mississippi Department](#) (containing the states of [Arkansas](#), [Texas](#) and part of [Louisiana](#)) from the rest of the Confederate States, effectively splitting the Confederacy in two for the rest of the war.

President's Letter

LCWRT is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

We are still using the Zoom format for our meetings. You will need to go to the Zoom website at zoom.us and download the Zoom app. For instructions on using the zoom app, you can sign on to *YouTube* at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9isp3qPeQ0E>. To join our meeting, click on the website you were sent after paying your dues for 2020-21. Enter the ID and passcode. When joining the meeting, choose the video option but mute your sound because the background noise in a large meeting can be distracting. To ask questions, click on the chat button at the bottom of the screen and type your question. If necessary, you can be unmuted to ask an involved question.

Topic: LCWRT October Meeting- A Civil War Captain and His Lady. The speaker is Gene Barr.
Time: Oct 28, 2020 06:45 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/7655778703?pwd=Um5Fc3UyM2g1MWhMcEMxejBjU3dKdz09>

Meeting ID: 765 577 8703

Passcode: 089424

In order to continue to receive the passcode, membership needs to be updated and a reduced membership fee paid, which will be good through August of 2021. If you live in Sun City, your updated CAM number needs to be included.

Remaining lectures, locations and dates of the upcoming 2020-21 lecture

Dec. 2, 2020	Ron Roth	How a Confederate Artillery Battery and a Black Union Regiment Defined the Meaning of the War	Zoom
2021			
Jan. 27	John Warley	11th Hour Effort to avoid the Civil War	Zoom
Feb. 24	Jack Davis	A Vice Pres. Flees, Breckinridge's Escape	Zoom
Mar. 24	Jerry Morris	Frank Mixson, a Confederate Soldier	Zoom
Apr. 28	Rowland/ Roth/ Wise	20th Anniversary	Zoom
May 26	Paul Quigley	To be determined	Zoom

Remembering Ed Bearss

We lost one of the nationally-recognized authorities on the Civil War in September when Ed Bearss died at age 97. Ed, a proud Marine, was badly wounded at Guadalcanal in WWII. He was not expected to live and spent almost 25 months in hospitals. His injuries may have limited his mobility, but did not diminish his enthusiasm or efforts. In 1956 he began a long career with the National Park Service, ultimately Ed became the Chief Historian. He led the work to discover, raise and preserve the Union gunboat Cairo which was sunk in 1862 near Vicksburg. He led interpretative walking tours of many of the Civil War battlefields, was an avid advocate of preserving battlefields and artifacts and, wrote numerous books on the Civil War. Over the years he spoke at many Civil War Round Table meetings all over the country. At age 80, he first came to the LCWRT in February 2002 and spoke about the First Battle of Manassas (Bull Run). He returned to the LCWRT 15 more times; his annual presentation brought out some of the biggest crowds in LCWRT history. Each year as we were preparing our meeting schedule, we would ask him if he could come speak to the LCWRT and he would reply "I will be there unless I am dead!" In the early days of the LCWRT we hosted a "morning after" meeting to allow LCWRT members an opportunity to meet the speaker and ask more detailed questions about the War. Ed gleefully participated in the meetings, answering questions and engaging in discussions of a wide range of Civil War topics. He will be missed.



**Ed Bearss speaks to the LCWRT at Bluffton High School Auditorium ...
March 2017 Photo by John Kemp**

LOWCOUNTRY CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE, INC.
MEMBERSHIP FORM - 2019/2020
ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP PERIOD SEPTEMBER 1, 2019 to AUGUST 31, 2020

Please **Print** All Information Below

Last Name First Name Badge Nickname

Last Name (Additional Household Member) First Name Badge Nickname

Address

City State Zip Code

Phone ()

Sun City Residents Only

CAM number CAM number

E-Mail E-mail
(We will keep this confidential!)

CURRENT MEMBER _____

NEW MEMBER _____

Household: Annual Membership (to Aug 31, 2020): \$40.00

We always need volunteers to continue making the LCWRT successful.

Please check the area(s) for which you are willing to volunteer:

- ____ Program Committee: help select topics & speakers
- ____ Assist in Production/Distribution of the *Minie Ball Gazette*
- ____ Assist on Program Night (Greeter, Collect Tickets or Guest Fees, Tally Program Attendance)
- ____ Historian
- ____ Maintain Membership Roster
- ____ Work at Sun City Club Fair
- ____ Web Site Maintenance

Mail to or leave in "lower" box: **Joseph Passiment, 26 Schooner Lane, Bluffton, SC 29909-4305**

Make Check Payable to: **LCWRT Inc.** Any questions, please call **Joseph Passiment** at **732-995-2102**

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The Lowcountry Civil War Round Table, Inc.

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501 (C) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code.**

Note: The website address is

www.lcwrt.squarespace.com and it can

be used to get current and historical LCWRT information.