

THE CHARGER

September 2011

479th Meeting

Vol. 33, #1

Civil War Fiction

Civil War fiction has always been popular, perhaps never more so than in recent years. Over the decades, there have been a number of very popular Civil War novels, some best sellers. Besides our speaker's work, here is a short list of the more notable novels:

Gone with the Wind by Margaret Mitchell

Cold Mountain by Charles Frazier

The March by E. L. Doctorow

The Red Badge of Courage by Stephen Crane

The Killer Angels by Michael Shaara

Gods and Generals by Jeff Shaara

Shiloh: A Novel by Shelby Foote

Little Women by Louisa May Alcott

Lincoln by Gore Vidal

Freedom by William Safire

Across Five Aprils by Irene Hunt

North and South by John Jakes

The Black Flower by Howard Bahr

I am certain there are more. And I am certain everyone has their own favorite. But those listed above are a good start, if only to an argument.

Dan Zeiser
Editor, *The Charger*

Robert Olmstead

Robert Olmstead is the Director of the Creative Writing Program at Wesleyan University. He is the author of four novels, a memoir, a textbook on fiction, a writing magazine and many journal articles. Prior to joining the Ohio Professor in Residence at Dickinson College and as director of the creative writing program at Boise State University.



Date: Wednesday,
September 14, 2011

Place: Judson Manor
1890 E. 107th Street
Cleveland, Ohio

Time: Drinks 6 pm
Dinner 6:45 pm

Reservations: Please send an email to ccwrt1956@yahoo.com with your reservation, or call Dan Zeiser at (440) 449-9311 by 9 pm the Sunday before the meeting.

Meal: Chicken scaloppini, roasted redskin potatoes, steamed broccoli, salad, and dessert.

**CLEVELAND
CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE
FOUNDED 1957**

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Editor - THE CHARGER - Dan Zeiser

President's Message September 2011

Welcome back to the Cleveland Civil War Roundtable's 55th season! I think we have an exceptional slate of speakers lined up for this year; I hope you enjoy the program.

Our schedule opens this month with Robert Olmstead, author of the Civil War-based novel, *Coal Black Horse*. First published in 2007 to much acclaim, *Coal Black Horse* is the story of 14-year-old Robey Childs as he journeys from his Virginia home in the late spring of 1863 in search of his father, a soldier in Lee's Army of Northern Virginia. Robey is sent on his journey by his mother who announces to him one day, "Thomas Jackson has died." For her, Jackson's death means the war is over and necessitates pulling her husband from the fray before tragedy strikes. Robey quickly sets off to find his father, "before July" as his mother instructs him, and immediately partners with a mythical black horse that carries him on his journey north, down the Shenandoah Valley.

All of you reading this know what Lee's army was up to in the late spring and early summer of 1863 and know that, to find his father, Robey must head towards Pennsylvania where Lee is angling to strike a fatal blow to Union morale and resolve. Robey's journey is both harrowing and maturing as his path takes him through war torn Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania

Though set in the Civil War, the book is not a historical novel in the manner of Michael Shaara's *The Killer Angels* or Gore Vidal's *Burr* or *Lincoln*. Olmstead's purpose is not to use the novelist's freedom to illuminate history (as I believe is the case with Shaara's and Vidal's books). Rather, Olmstead's purpose is more fundamental - illuminating the human condition while telling a good story. It certainly is not a book about the glory or intrigues of war - there is little glory in *Coal Black Horse* - but rather about the bitterness and inhumanity of people at war and the human capacity to persevere through unimaginable suffering. Whatever Olmstead's intentions, *Coal Black Horse* illuminates much about the Civil War and the people living through it and does so on a very intimate, very painful, and in the end, inspiring level. Olmstead's experience writing this book provides the subject for his talk to us this month, "Experiencing the Civil War."

I was introduced to *Coal Black Horse* by my wife, who gave it to me as a birthday gift several years ago. On that same birthday she also gave me another "Civil War" book published at about the same time, Drew Gilpin Faust's *This Republic of Suffering*. Faust's book is about how America's modern view of death and dying was shaped by the Civil War. She writes in her book's introduction, "Death created the modern American union, not just by ensuring national survival, but by shaping enduring national structures and commitments. The work of death was Civil War America's most fundamental and most demanding undertaking." Faust covers the details of 19th century battlefield rescue and recovery efforts as well as funeral and embalming practice to give insight into American attitudes towards death. I know that description is hardly the stuff of dust jacket hyperbole, but it is a compelling book, every bit as good as *Coal Black Horse*. The two books, in fact, cover much the same thematic ground, one from a historian's perspective, the other from a novelist's, and provide an interesting, supportive study when read back-to-back as I happened to do. Both books are highly recommended.

We are in the midst of the Civil War sesquicentennial and, I am sure like many of you, I find myself regularly checking various Civil War websites to see what was going on in America 150 years ago. As I review these timelines, there are two types of events that I find especially interesting: the BIG significant event that the history books write about (Vicksburg, Gettysburg, etc.) and the small significant event that only proves significant with the clarity of hindsight.

In September 1861, there were two such small events that merit attention, both having to do with naval affairs. On September 13, 1861, Marines from the *USS Colorado* set the privateer William H. Judah ablaze in Confederate-controlled Pensacola, FL harbor, marking the first naval action of the Civil War and the beginning of a virtually unbroken four-year string of success for the U.S. Navy. Three days later, on September 16, 1861, the Committee of Naval Constructors accepted plans for the construction of three ironclad ships, Galena, Ironsides, and Monitor. It was less than 6 months later, on March 9, 1862, that John Ericsson's innovative *USS Monitor* drove off the *CSS Virginia* at Hampton Roads, VA, saving the U.S. blockading squadron engaged there from perhaps total destruction and opening the era of modern naval warfare.

Respectfully submitted, Paul Burkholder

**Cleveland Civil War Roundtable
Past Presidents**

- 2011 Lisa Kempfer
- 2010 Dennis Keating
- 2009 Jon Thompson
- 2008 Terry Koozer
- 2007 John Fazio
- 2006 Dave Carrino
- 2005 Mel Maurer
- 2004 Warren McClelland
- 2003 Maynard Bauer
- 2002 Bill McGrath
- 2001 William Vodrey
- 2000 Bob Boyda
- 1999 Dick Crews
- 1998 John Moore
- 1997 Dan Zeiser
- 1996 John Sutula
- 1995 Norton London
- 1994 Robert Battisti
- 1993 Kevin Callahan
- 1992 Bob Baucher
- 1991 Joe Tirpak
- 1990 Ken Callahan Jr.
- 1989 Neil Glaser
- 1988 Martin Graham
- 1987 George Vourlojianis
- 1986 Tim Beatty
- 1985 Brian Kowell
- 1984 Neil Evans

- 1983 William Victory
- 1982 John Harkness
- 1981 Thomas Geschke
- 1980 Charles Spiegle
- 1979 William Bates
- 1978 Richard McCrae
- 1977 James Chapman
- 1976 Milton Holmes
- 1975 Thomas Gretter
- 1974 Nolan Heidelbaugh
- 1973 Arthur Jordan
- 1972 Bernard Drews
- 1971 Kenneth Callahan
- 1970 Frank Schuhle
- 1969 Donald Heckaman
- 1968 Frank Moran
- 1967 William Schlesinger
- 1966 Donald Hamill
- 1965 Lester Swift
- 1964 Guy DiCarlo Jr.
- 1963 Paul Guenther
- 1962 Edward Downer
- 1961 Charles Clarke
- 1960 Howard Preston
- 1959 John Cullen Jr.
- 1958 George Farr Jr.
- 1957 Kenneth Grant

**CLEVELAND CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE
2011-2012 SCHEDULE**

September 14, 2011

***Experiencing
the Civil War***

**Robert
Olmstead**



October 12, 2011

***The Battle of
Monocacy***

Marc Leepson



Destruction of the RR bridge
over the Monocacy River

November 9, 2011

***Robert Todd
Lincoln***

**Jason
Emerson**



December 14, 2011

***How Sibling
Rivalry Helped
Spawn an Assassin***

Nora Titone



January 11, 2012

***The Dick Crews Annual Debate:
Lincoln and Douglas Debate***

**Mel Maurer as Abraham Lincoln
Chris Fortunato as Stephen Douglas
Moderator: William F. B. Vodrey**

February 8, 2012

***A. P. Hill
at Gettysburg***

Jon Thompson



March 14, 2012

***The Barlows and
the Gordons***

John Fazio



April 11, 2012

***How Robert E. Lee
Lost the Civil War***

**Edward H.
Bonekemper III**



May 16, 2012 (Note later date)

Vicksburg!

Ed Bearss



Historically Deficient

David A. Carrino

Anyone who has seen the movie *Jurassic Park* might recall the scene when John Hammond, the billionaire who is the mastermind behind the park, recruits several scientists to evaluate his creation. When the scientists are sent on a trial tour of the attraction, the dinosaurs fail to cooperate and remain out of sight. After a few stops at different paddocks, the scientists fail to see any dinosaurs. This prompts one of the scientists, the cynical Dr. Ian Malcolm, to ask Hammond with all the sarcasm that he can muster, "You do plan to have dinosaurs on your dinosaur tour, right?" A paraphrase of this line occurred to me as a question I should ask the Roundtable members when I was chosen to serve as historian for 2011-2012: "You do plan to have a historian as your historian, right?" This is not to say that I am not honored that the nominating committee and the members of the Roundtable selected me for this position. Far from it, I am enormously honored by this, and I look forward to carrying out the duties of the Roundtable historian. That said, I have some serious misgivings about the Roundtable's choice as its next historian.

For example, the Roundtable's next historian has absolutely no training in history. Rather, I have simply read about history over the years, in particular about the Civil War. This makes me eminently unqualified compared to many members of the Roundtable. Because of this, the history briefs for the upcoming Roundtable session will consist of anecdotes that come from my admittedly limited knowledge of the topics that I present. No doubt there will be errors of omission and perhaps even outright factual inaccuracies. When these occur, I hope that these flubs will be pointed out to me by someone with superior knowledge of history than I possess (meaning everyone who is reading this). I am fond of saying that I try to avoid being so old a dog that I am unable to learn new tricks, which means that I not only accept but welcome being informed when I am incorrect about something. (Having raised two daughters, I have extensive experience with being told that I am wrong.)

The choice of topics for the monthly history briefs will be items that I find interesting and seem to me to be relatively obscure. This approach comes from my desire not to hear what I have heard before, but to hear something with which I am unfamiliar so that I can learn something new. However, due to the aforementioned limited scope of my historical knowledge, something that is new to me has a likely possibility to be something well known to many others in the Roundtable. When this happens, I ask those in attendance to simply bear with me or even ignore my blathering altogether. (Again, having raised two daughters, I have considerable experience with being ignored.) If some significant oversight is noted by anyone who pays attention to my babbling, I am only too happy to be informed about this. After all, my monthly history brief ramblings will end up being deposited on the Roundtable website. In light of all the exemplary work that Paul Burkholder has done to make our website outstanding, Roundtable members can view their assistance with fixing my blunders as their contributions to presenting our best face to the cyberworld.

Finally, my selection as historian marks the second time that the Roundtable has saddled me with the exceedingly unenviable task of succeeding Mel Maurer. When I was Mel's successor as president, I said at that time that I knew how Phil Bengtson felt after Bengtson followed Vince Lombardi as coach of the Green Bay Packers. I expect that it will not be long into my tenure as historian that Mel's historical expertise and podium presence are sorely missed. Unfortunately, someone has to succeed the Abraham Lincolns who hold office, and the best that can be hoped for by those (like me) who find themselves in that position is to do better than Andrew Johnson. My goal as historian is to provide a history brief each month that is interesting and informative to at least one person in attendance. My hope is to provide a history brief that contains at least one nugget that is interesting to most of the members in attendance. My desire is to learn from the history briefs even more information than I present. If all goes well, Roundtable members might be willing to comment

about my tenure as historian with a paraphrase of another memorable line uttered by Ian Malcolm in *Jurassic Park*. This line came after the horrific encounter with the Tyrannosaurus rex, during which one of the tour vehicles was ravaged, one of the characters was devoured, and Malcolm broke his leg. When Malcolm, injured and terrified, was rescued from this harrowing experience, he referred to his host, billionaire John Hammond, and said to his rescuers, "Remind me to thank John for a lovely weekend." If my time as historian is worthwhile, Roundtable members may ask to be reminded to do the same to me, and maybe they will even say it without the sarcasm with which Malcolm coated his remark.

Editor's note: Dave Carrino is a former President of the Roundtable, having served during the 2005-6 year. Although trained as a biologist, Dave's knowledge of the Civil War is much better than he would acknowledge. And it is much better than Americans in general. A June 3, 2010 article in *The Atlantic* noted a survey of Americans' political knowledge done by the American Revolution Center. Below is a summary of the results. Sadly, our country does a poor job of educating its citizens as to its history, or Americans in general are not interested in history, or both. Let us hope that Dave's history briefs at each meeting help us all learn more of our fascinating history.

- More Americans could identify Michael Jackson as the composer of "Beat It" and "Billie Jean" than could identify the Bill of Rights as a body of amendments to the Constitution.
- More than 50 percent of respondents attributed the quote "From each according to his ability to each according to his needs" to either Thomas Paine, George Washington or President Obama. The quote is from Karl Marx, author of "The Communist Manifesto."
- More than a third did not know the century in which the American Revolution took place, and half of respondents believed that either the Civil War, the Emancipation Proclamation or the War of 1812 occurred before the American Revolution.
- With a political movement now claiming the mantle of the Revolutionary-era Tea Party, more than half of respondents misidentified the outcome of the 18th-century agitation as a repeal of taxes, rather than as a key mobilization of popular resistance to British colonial rule.
- A third mistakenly believed that the Bill of Rights does not guarantee a right to a trial by jury, while 40 percent mistakenly thought that it did secure the right to vote.
- More than half misidentified the system of government established in the Constitution as a direct democracy, rather than a republic—a question that must be answered correctly by immigrants qualifying for U.S. citizenship.

Editor's Note: Prior to taking the quiz, 89% of respondents expressed confidence they could pass; 83% went on to fail. One bright note was that more than 90% agreed it is important to know the history and principles of the American Revolution. You can take the quiz at www.americanrevolutioncenter.org/what_do_you_know.

Visitors' Center Developed for Oklahoma's Largest Civil War Battle

RENTIESVILLE, OKLA. – An impressive multi-million dollar partnership between four federal agencies, a state agency, McIntosh County, several local businesses, and a non-profit organization will provide funding, infrastructure and in-kind services to construct a visitors' center at the historic site of Oklahoma's largest military engagement, The Battle of Honey Springs.

The federal involvement includes the National Park Service, as well as all three agencies of USDA Rural Development – Rural Business Service, Rural Utilities Service and Rural Housing Service.

“With increasingly scarce resources, such an ambitious project is only possible with many public and private partners,” said Ryan McMullen, State Director of USDA Rural Development. “The partnership recognizes that rural areas should increasingly capitalize on the tourism industry. The development of this attraction will create jobs, as well as educate visitors on one of Oklahoma's most historic sites.”

The Battle of Honey Springs was the largest of the 107 documented hostile encounters in Indian Territory during the Civil War and the nation's largest battle in which African American, American Indian, Hispanic and Anglo American soldiers engaged. The heroics of the Civil War's first African American regiment, the First Kansas Colored, were largely responsible for the Union's victory there. Often referred to as the “Gettysburg of the West,” the Confederate defeat at Honey Springs opened the way for Union occupation of Fort Smith and later Union victories in the Red River Valley.

Bob Blackburn, Executive Director of the Oklahoma Historical Society, is among many that worked for years to preserve and share the historic nature of the site.

“Since July 17, 1863, the Honey Springs Battlefield has been hallowed ground where patriots on both sides of the conflict died for a cause they believed in,” said Blackburn. “To commemorate the significance of the battle, the Oklahoma Historical Society starting buying land there in the 1960s and followed with the development of a bridge, roads, and interpretive trails in the 1990s. The visitor center will complete the master plan for making the site accessible to the greatest number of people. We owe that to the men who fought and died there.”

Today, the 1,100-acre battlefield site is owned by the Oklahoma Historical Society and features six walking trails with 55 interpretive signs. The site sits next to the historic African-American community of Rentiesville, straddling the Muskogee and McIntosh County line.

The site offers visitors the opportunity to enjoy hiking and area wildlife, while learning about the Battle of Honey Springs and the impact of the Civil War on American Indians living in Indian Territory. The Civil War's toll on life and property was greater per-capita in what is present-day Oklahoma than any state in the country.

The Friends of Honey Springs organization will lease the land from the Oklahoma Historical Society to construct the new visitors' center. It will not only offer engaging educational exhibits about the 9,000 soldiers that fought there, but will serve as a library and a community center for the residents of Rentiesville, McMullen said.

Upon completion of the 5,000 square foot visitors' center, the National Park Service predicts an annual visitation of 150,000 people, which would represent \$9 million in tourism revenues for the state, said Emmy Stidham of Checotah, President of the Oklahoma Historical Society Board of Directors. Stidham said the location of the battlefield is a benefit, as well.

"Honey Springs is a perfect stop for people traveling between Oklahoma City and Little Rock or between Kansas City, Tulsa and Dallas," Stidham said. "It's a good stopping point, easily accessible from I-40 and Highway 69. Our area is known for hospitality, and we'd love more people to come."

USDA Rural Development has awarded nearly \$500,000 in grant funds and over \$600,000 in financing through the Rural Business Enterprise Grant and Community Facilities programs. A portion of the financing includes a guaranteed loan through Peoples National Bank in Checotah. The project also includes a Rural Utilities Service award to Cross Telephone Cooperative to extend high speed internet access to the area as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

State and local funds will come from \$800,000 worth of site development and in-kind services from the Oklahoma Historical Society and thousands more in road improvements from McIntosh County. Commissioner Bobby James plans to pave two miles of county roadway and rebuild a bridge to provide better access to the site. James will use funding from the County Improvements for Roads and Bridges (CIRB) program, which provides state construction funding for high-priority county roads or bridges.

"There are lots of people in our community who have been working hard on this for years and years," James said. "I picked this project [for CIRB funding] because I felt like it was something we really needed because of the importance of the battlefield."

McMullen said the Friends of Honey Springs plan to complete the visitors' center by July of 2013, marking the 150th anniversary of the battle.

From the Civil War Trust. August 31, 2011 news release.

New Exhibit at the Ohio Historical Society

Follow the Flag

In the new exhibit Follow the Flag, see ten meticulously restored battle flags, fruit of the Ohio Historical Society's 10-year-old Save the Flags campaign, accompanied by stories of those who lived through America's epic war, told in their own words. Learn what the flags represented to the brave Ohioans who carried them into battle.

Since 2001, the Ohio Historical Society, designated caretaker of a collection of Ohio battle flags that is the property of the Ohio National Guard, has worked to raise funds to restore the flags, many of which have significant damage. To date, 19 of the 388 Civil War flags have been restored with help from Ohioans.

In the new exhibit, you'll learn how conservators remove dust and residue from fragile fabrics and perform specialized conservation techniques. You'll also discover how much it costs to keep the effort going and learn about the campaign to Save the Flags and how you can contribute to conserving and restoring more flags. Follow the Flag is made possible in part by the Gordon Chandler Memorial Fund of The Columbus Foundation.



From www.ohiocivilwar150.org.

Field Trip September 29 - October 2, 2011

Lee's Retreat from Petersburg to Appomatox

Contact Paul Burkholder at pkburkholder@gmail.com.

NEXT MONTH

THE BATTLE OF MONOCACY

MARC LEEPSON

The Civil War in Central Missouri

by Tom Uhlenbrock, Missouri State Parks

A large cannon guards the entrance to “Civil War Missouri: A House Dividing,” a new exhibit at the Missouri State Museum on the first floor of the Capitol in Jefferson City. But it’s a much humbler-looking weapon inside that Julie Kemper, the museum’s curator of exhibits, picked as her favorite among the artifacts on display. “It’s a sweet-gum mortar, made of a hollowed-out piece of wood,” Kemper said of the stubby cannon mounted on a wood frame and reinforced with iron banding. They were made by an African-American unit in New Orleans, and belched out six-pound shells. “They were intended to last one battle, and split,” she said. “But this one didn’t get enough use because the battle was cut short. I don’t know of any other museum that has one. And, the amazing thing is, we have two.”

To mark the 150th anniversary of the start of the Civil War, the Missouri State Museum, a unit of the state park system, created the exhibit to tell the story of the war from its premature start in the Kansas-Missouri border war in 1856 and ending in 1865, with the Union victorious but both sides bitter. Among other artifacts on display in the museum is the state seal, which Gov. Claiborne Fox Jackson took with him when he fled Jefferson City with his pro-Southern government in 1861. The seal is on loan from the Missouri State Archives. Also on display are selections from the museum’s collection of rare flags, one of the largest in the country. “We have the flag of the Irish 7th Missouri Infantry, which had special permission to make their own regimental flag,” Kemper said. “We also have John Sappington Marmaduke’s personal flag.”

A red granite obelisk marking Marmaduke’s grave in a Jefferson City cemetery describes his celebrated life: Schooled at Harvard and Yale, graduate of West Point, a Confederate major general wounded at the Battle of Shiloh, and the 25th governor of Missouri, who died while in office. An inscription says, “He was fearless and incorruptible.”

‘Oh, for help!’

The creators of the Civil War exhibit wanted to give the experiences of real Missourians in the war, Kemper said, and describe Missouri’s important role in the national conflict. “We use sound, images, text from letters,” Kemper said. “Mostly, what we’re trying to give is a personal story about the individuals.” During her research, Kemper said she became enamored with the story of the Roseberry family and with the writings of Rachel Anderson of Greene County, who eloquently described the horrors of the war in her letters. “The Roseberrys were up in northeast Missouri – two men, brothers and fathers, and eight in the next generation who all ended up in the 21st Infantry together,” Kemper said. “One of the sons, Thomas A., went in as a drummer boy at 15 years old. He ended up deserting, he was scared. They sent his father after him.” The boy later was discharged, so he wasn’t listed as a deserter, and re-joined the 21st while his brothers were still serving.

The exhibit has five sound domes with actors portraying the voices of the war. Stand beneath one and you hear an actress reciting a quote from the bereaved Rachel Anderson. “This state is in an alarming condition,” she says. “Towns, farms, houses are being burned. Men hung or shot. Women accidentally killed and wounded. Children crippled or killed by careless soldiers. Oh, for help!”

Battle in a wheat field

Missouri was the site of 1,162 Civil War battles, only Virginia and Tennessee had more. A map in the museum exhibit illustrates 900 battles for which the location and numbers of soldiers could be confirmed. One of the earliest, and most pivotal, battles was fought on June 17, 1861, in a wheat field outside the town of Boonville in central Missouri. Just 20 minutes long, the skirmish may have turned the tide against the Confederacy.

Gov. Claiborne Fox Jackson intended to lead Missouri into the Confederacy, and declared his sympathies in a stormy meeting in St. Louis with Union Gen. Nathaniel Lyon. When Jackson, along with Confederate Maj. Gen. Sterling Price, fled back to Jefferson City, Lyon gave chase with 2,000 soldiers. Jackson was positioned with some 1,500 pro-Southern State Guardsmen under Col. John Sappington Marmaduke in a wheat field near Boonville. Marmaduke knew his men were ill-trained and poorly equipped, but Jackson insisted they take on the advancing Union forces. Marmaduke’s men withered under the accurate aim of the Union artillery, and he ordered a retreat. When the fighting was over, three Southerners were killed, and up to nine wounded. The Union casualties were five killed, seven wounded.

Battle over corn

Maryellen McVicker, a college history professor who is co-chair of the Boonville Civil War Commemorative Commission, said the battle fit the age-old axiom that an army travels on its belly. “The battle gave Union forces command of the Missouri River,” McVicker said. “All of the food, particularly the corn, traveled by river. The battle was not about the men, it was about the food supply. “The Confederacy couldn’t get the corn; that’s one of the reasons why Missouri stayed in the Union.” An ex-Confederate, Thomas L. Snead, wrote in 1888 of the battle: “Insignificant as was this engagement in a military aspect, it was in fact a stunning blow to the Southern Rights’ people of the state, and one which did incalculable and unending injury to the Confederates.”

Thespian Hall, which was built in 1857 in downtown Boonville, was commandeered by the Union army and used as a headquarters and hospital. The Confederates fought three more battles in efforts to take the town, but none were successful.

The commission staged a re-enactment this summer on the field where the first battle was fought 150 years ago. Others events are planned for the coming years. Visit <http://www.goboonville.com> for a schedule.



Thespian Hall

Taken from the Daily Journal of Park Hills, Missouri, this is the third in an occasional series on the Civil War.