



General Orders

Lewis's Texas Brigade

Vol. 21
No. 10
May
2010

www.houstoncivilwar.com

MEETING – THURS, May 20, 2010

The Briar Club
2603 Timmons Lane @ Westheimer
6:00 Cash Bar
7:00 Dinner & Meeting

E-Mail drzuckero@sbcglobal.net
OR call him at (281) 479-1232 to Reserve
by Monday 6 PM Prior to May 20
Dinner \$30; Lecture Only \$5

E-Mail Reservation is Preferred;
You Do Need to Reserve for Lecture Only!

MR. WILLIAM (Bill) ATKINSON: *Beauvoir Restoration* By David Rains



Bill Atkinson

The Houston Civil War Round Table is pleased to welcome William (Bill) Atkinson to Houston and to our Round Table as he gives a presentation on Beauvoir – the Jefferson Davis home and Presidential Library located in Biloxi, Mississippi. The presentation will begin with a short DVD overview and history of Beauvoir that is narrated by Dr. Charles Sullivan – copies of the DVD will be made

available to all attendees who make a nominal “contribution to the cause” – contributions are made to “Friends of Beauvoir, Operations/Recovery”. Following the DVD presentation will be Bill’s review of the devastating damage that occurred from Hurricane Katrina and the work that has been done to restore the Davis home, library, museum and grounds of the Beauvoir compound. This restoration work is being recognized by HWCRT with the annual



Beauvoir – April 2010
Photographer Norm Lewis

Vandiver Award and Bill will be accepting the award on behalf of Beauvoir in addition to being our meeting speaker.

Please join us on May 20 for Mr. Atkinson’s talk and award acceptance and be a part of this very worthwhile preservation project.

ABOUT OUR SPEAKER

William (Bill) Atkinson is a native of Yazoo Co., Mississippi and a B.A. graduate in History from the University of Mississippi (Ole Miss) where he participated in many campus organizations and student activities.

Though his career has been primarily focused in oil and gas and other business ventures, he has maintained a life-long interest in the history of the South and of the Confederacy. These interests have led him into active memberships in many organizations including his fifteen-year service as Camp Commander of the Yazoo City Camp #69 Confederate States Navy. As a long-time member and supporter of the "Sons of Confederate Veterans" (SCV), he served as 2nd Lt. Commander of the Mississippi Division from 2007 to 2009 and will serve as Division Commander of this organization thru 2011. While in the SCV, he has been directly involved in locating and placing markers on 300 Confederate graves and also worked on the SCV committee that placed the statue at Gettysburg for the 11th Mississippi Volunteer Infantry Regiment in 2000.

Our speaker also received the prestigious Jefferson Davis Award from the United Daughters of the Confederacy for his outstanding work in cemetery preservation. He is a member of the Beauvoir Board and sponsored a Beauvoir initiative to recognize 200 prisoners of war who died on Ship Island.

After the devastating Katrina Hurricane of 2005, Bill has been very much involved in fundraising to restore the Beauvoir Endowment after it was depleted by restoration expenses. We are indeed fortunate to have Bill speak at our May meeting to give us a first-hand account of the excellent restoration work that has been performed at the Beauvoir property.

MAY QUIZ QUESTION

By Jim Godlove



In what city did Jefferson Davis die?

(The answer to last months question was Sam Houston.)

PHOTO OF THE MONTH

By Karen Stone



*Monument to the 72nd Pennsylvania Infantry
Photographer Jenny Goellint*

Last month Karen Stone shared this beautiful photo with us, but was unable to give credit to the photographer. HCWRT member Scott Shuster was familiar with the image and has supplied the following information. The photo is one of the award winners from the 2009 Civil War Preservation Trust Photo Contest. It appears in their 2010 annual calendar, and represents the month of December. Jenny Goellnit of Cleveland, Ohio submitted the picture. The picture is of the monument to the 72nd Pennsylvania Infantry and is located at The Angle, on Cemetery Ridge in Gettysburg.

2010-2011 Elections

Voting is on the agenda for the May meeting and nominees on the ballot are as follows:

President:	David Rains
Vice-President:	John Barnes
Secretary:	Ben Ramsey
Treasurer:	Barry Brueggeman

Directors:	Roland Bienvenu
	Gary Chandler
	Mike Harrington
	Donnie Stowe

The immediate Past President: Duane Lewis



APRIL BOOK RAFFLE by Donnie Stowe

This month the HCWRT book raffle begins with **A TERRY TEXAS RANGER- *The life record of H.W. Graber***, Introduced by Thomas W. Cutrer and donated by Mike Harrington; second in line is **THE CIVIL WAR A NARRATIVE – *Red River to Appomattox*** by Shelby Foote. As almost all of you should know, this is the third and final volume in Foote's narrative series and is donated by our member/Past president- Jim Godlove. We also have **ROADS TO ANTIETAM**, by John W. Schildt and another donation by Jim Godlove. To complete this month's raffle is **CIVIL WAR GHOSTS and LEGENDS** by Nancy Roberts – Donor is unknown.

Members are encouraged to donate some of your well read books or a small monetary donation for purchase of books to continue a valuable support to the HCWRT Raffle.

HCWRT SPEAKERS 2010 – 2011 CAMPAIGN

Sep 16, 2010	William W. Bergen
Oct 21, 2010	Brian McGinty
Nov 18, 2010	Troy Banzhaf
Dec 16, 2010	Donald Jones
Jan 21, 2011	Ed Bearess
Feb 17, 2011	Ed Bonekemper
Mar 17, 2011	To Be Announced
Apr 21, 2011	Don Frazier
May 19, 2011	To Be Announced

GUEST COMMENTARY *RETHINKING THE MAN* The Johnston-Hood-Davis Controversy—Another Viewpoint by Greg Biggs, Clarksville Round Table Part II

Many people do not respect the generalship of John Bell Hood when he rose to command the Army of Tennessee on July 17, 1864. Much of this comes from his handling of that army in the Tennessee Campaign of October-December, 1864 which led to the bloody assault at Franklin, the crushing defeat at Nashville and the long retreat back to Alabama. This campaign ended Hood's army career.

Yet Joe Johnston, when seeking a corps commander in early 1864, wanted the hard-hitting Hood. He was after the Hood of Gaine's Mill, the Hood of Sharpsburg; the fighting Hood of the Army of Northern Virginia. Hood, recovering from his wounding at Chickamauga, made himself available to Jefferson Davis and sought this command. When he arrived in Georgia, Johnston turned to Hood for advice and leaned on him to be the hammer to Hardee's anvil. Hardee, a corps commander for over a year and a veteran with the army, was perplexed and would leave the army after the Atlanta Campaign was over due to his dislike of Hood.

Hood's attack at Resaca drove Sherman's flank back over two miles but he failed to coordinate the assault between his divisions so that only one took the brunt. Hood bungled the brilliant attack plan at Cassville by pulling his corps back when his last division was struck by the lost Union cavalry division of Edward McCook. Hood failed to recall that "Stonewall" Jackson's flanking attack at Chancellorsville was also struck in the rear by Dan Sickles and yet Jackson continued to his objective. To be fair to Hood he was with Longstreet in Suffolk at this time but fully learned of the battle upon his return. He cites this attack in his memoirs as an inspiration for his conduct in the Atlanta Campaign. It was after Cassville when Hood began to write his back-channel letters to President Davis complaining about Johnston and obfuscating his own errors. William Hardee also wrote a couple letters to Davis however. Both should be condemned for this completely bypassed their proper chains of command, something very sacred to any army in war.

Hood also bungled the attack south of Kennesaw Mountain at Kolb's Farm. He did not recon his front and if he had he would have noted a large swamp that blocked the advance of one of his divisions. Hood also failed to coordinate his corps artillery with any of his attacks, something that Napoleon never failed to do.

Hood also began to complain about Johnston's choices of defensive positions, first at Cassville and again at the River Line. But he continued the letters to Richmond.

By mid-July, Davis realized that Johnston had given up 80 miles of north Georgia without stopping Sherman and sought advice towards a replacement commander. As usual, he turned to Robert E. Lee. Lee's response told the truth about Hood but Davis failed to see through Lee's meaning. Lee stated, "Hood is a bold fighter. I am doubtful as to the other qualities necessary." Later that day Lee sent another message, "Hood is a good fighter, very industrious on the battlefield, careless off..." what Lee is telling Davis is, sure, Hood can fight, but there is much more to running an army than fighting. Indeed, Hood would prove to be a poor logistician and his failure at artillery coordination would put the brunt of his attacks fully on his veteran infantry causing them more casualties than they needed to suffer. Davis' decision to fire Johnston and replace him with Hood was iced when Braxton Bragg, his military advisor who had been sent to Georgia, sent this message, "General Hood has been in favor of giving battle, and mentions to me numerous instances of opportunities lost. If any change is made, Lt. Gen. Hood would give unlimited satisfaction, and my estimation of him, already high, has been raised by this campaign." The same letter slandered Gen. Hardee whom Davis was considering for the job but that comes from the infighting between Bragg and Hardee while Bragg commanded the army.

Be this as it may. Hood found himself in a nearly impossible position for any army commander; taking over an army with their backs to the place they were tasked to defending. Yet, like Lee in the Seven Days, Hood sought to strike and did. His first attack was at Peachtree Creek on July 20th. There is evidence that Johnston sought to attack in the same area as Hood would attack but Hood's delays in getting the attack off coupled with failure to recon the front (again!) and Hardee's failure to fight his corps properly, turned this attack into a bloodletting with little to show for it other than hitting Gen. Thomas' Army of the Cumberland very hard. Indeed, when news of Hood taking command reached Sherman he asked his officers about him. Gen. John Schofield, Hood's West Point classmate, told him that, "he will hit you like Hell! "

Hood's next sortie was his best chance and it shows a good talent at planning an attack of this style; a flanking maneuver hitting Gen. James McPherson's open left flank east of Atlanta and rolling it up. As Hood stated in his memoirs, his inspiration was the Lee-Jackson attack at Chancellorsville, and it its planning it was virtually identical.

However, as Hood showed at Gettysburg, he often expected too much from his troops. McPherson had cut the Georgia railroad to Augusta and was pushing towards the city so hard that Hardee's troops,

expected to be the main corps in the flanking attack, were not able to fully disengage until about midnight of July 21st/22nd. Hardee had to march his troops seventeen miles including heading south before turning east and then north to get behind McPherson's flank and form his divisions into lines of battle. They did so with no sleep. Yet, despite being hours late, this corps launched its attack in a devastating style.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

The Houston Civil War Round Table is dedicated to the study of the civilian, military, and cultural aspects of United States history during the period of 1861 – 1865 and to the preservation of historical sites and artifacts.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ ST _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

How did you learn about us? _____

Email Address _____

Mail To: Houston Civil War Round Table
P. O. Box 4215
Houston, TX 77210-4215

NEW MEMBER

\$40 – Individual joining in Apr – Dec
\$20 – Individual joining in Jan – Mar
\$45 – Family joining in Apr – Dec
\$22 – Family joining in Jan – Mar
\$15 – Student or Out-of-State

RENEWAL

\$40 – Individual
\$45 – Family
\$15 – Student or Out-of-State

However, instead of hitting an open flank and moving into McPherson's rear, McPherson had moved the 16th Corps to extend his flank from the Bald Hill to the east and thus placed them right in front of Hardee's troops. This was done after his personal reconnaissance of his lines showed his open left. His placement of the 16th Corps stopped Hardee's attack here but other divisions moved to the assault to the Confederate left and overran the Union lines south of the Bald Hill (renamed Leggett's Hill for the stand of

the Union troops under Gen. Mortimer Leggett who held it). But the Federals stopped every attack against the hill itself. Later that afternoon, Hood unleashed Gen. Ben Cheatham's Corps against the Union center. The Confederates hit the Union line so hard that six Union brigades were knocked back and the center fully pierced but by this time the Union troops from the left could be sent to counter-attack and seal the line. They were lead by Gen. John Logan, new commander of the Army of the Tennessee as McPherson had been killed earlier in the day. By sundown the lines had been retaken and the Confederates fell back into the Atlanta outer works.

Hood's plan for the Battle of Atlanta was very sound and, as executed, came very close to achieving its objectives of smashing the Union Army of the Tennessee. The only tactical fault that Hood committed was this; when making a flanking or enveloping attack, the attacking army has to make demonstrations to the enemy's front to keep them fixed into place. Lee did this while Jackson was making his march at Chancellorsville. Where Hood made his mistake was by not attacking with Cheatham's Corps first and then attack with Hardee's. All things being equal, the Union center would still have been shattered and since the only troops available to retake that position could come from the Union left, when Hardee's attack came forward those troops would not have been in his front and McPherson's army would, more than likely, have been crushed. As it was, Sherman was hit so hard that he stopped his advance on the east side of the city and looked towards the west side for further maneuver to cut Atlanta's railroads.

For the Battle of Ezra Church, July 28th, Hood planned the same attack against the same Union army, now under Gen. Oliver Howard. The two corps, under A. P. Stewart and newly arrived S.D. Lee, were to hold the Union troops in the front and then move and strike their right flank after securing the ridge line on the next day. But the Federals won the footrace to the ridge and were entrenching when Lee took his corps into the attack without waiting for Stewart to come up and extend his line to the west. As such, the Federals stopped the attacks cold. Hood's third sortie came to naught but not due to anything Hood did.

The last attack was at Jonesboro, August 31st, came after Hood's defensive victory at Utoy Creek on August 6th. In this attack, Hood's troops, tired of attacking entrenched Federals, performed poorly. Once again the Federals won the race to the hills west of the town and had dug in before Hood's two corps assaulted. The attacks were easily repulsed. On September 1st, Hood left one corps, Hardee's, to hold the last railroad into the city and he faced six Union corps. Sherman had a great opportunity to shatter one third of the Army of Tennessee and did not pull his own trigger. Hardee had his finest day as a tactical

commander and other than losing one brigade in his center, was able to stop every Union attack. When the news arrived that Hardee could not keep the railroad open, Hood decided to abandon Atlanta. He blew up some 80 rail cars full of ammunition and pulled his other two corps south to Lovejoy Station south of Jonesboro to link up with Hardee. Sherman sent a message to Lincoln that stated, "Atlanta is our's and fairly won." The north was electrified and Hood's battered army was forced to eat crow.

Overall, John Bell Hood did not do as badly as many people think around Atlanta. None of his attacks were planned as frontal assaults as often stated. Even Peachtree Creek was planned as an en echelon attack from the right to the left with one division turning the Union left. That division got lost and failed to perform its mission. That was more Hardee's fault than Hood's. The Battle of Atlanta showed that Hood had tactical ability and it was only his mistake of attacking with Hardee last instead of first that prevented him from a tremendous victory. As it was he came close anyway. Yet he is accused of making fruitless assaults. Hood was no military genius to be sure but he was no total dunderhead either, at least in histenure from July 17th to September 2nd. His mission, as described to him from his president, was to drive Sherman from Atlanta and he tried to fulfill that mission to his best ability. He certainly showed more tactical ability here than he did at Franklin.

I can certainly criticize Hood for the Tennessee Campaign, and even his maneuver at Spring Hill showed sound tactical ability. But he can be soundly attacked for Franklin and risking his heavily outnumbered army at Nashville where it had no hope whatsoever of accomplishing its mission of retaking that city.

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

AILING DUANE LEWIS

Duane has had to miss the last two of our meetings due to health problems but he is doing better now. We would like to thank Duane for his service as president of HWCRT this past year and we wish him well with his continued recovery. We look forward to him rejoining us for future meetings.

JOHN L. PICKERING Jr.

JOHN L. PICKERING, JR., born February 15, 1935 in Wiggins, Mississippi, died April 20, 2010 in Houston, Texas. A resident of Kingwood, John retired from Mobil Chemical in 1995. He is survived by his wife, Patty Pickering; sons, John Pickering and Mark Pickering; daughter, Jennifer Faulkenbery; sister, Linda Scott; brothers, Jerry and David Pickering; and six grandchildren. Visitation was held Friday, April 23, 2010 at Kingwood Funeral Home. Funeral Services were held on Saturday, April 24, 2010 at Kingwood First Baptist Church, 3500 Woodland Hills Dr. Kingwood, TX 77339, followed by interment in Rosewood Cemetery in Humble, TX. To send condolences to the family, or for more tributes, please visit:
www.kingwoodfuneralhome.com.

DISCOVERING THE CIVIL WAR

The National Archives Experience is pleased to present programs celebrating our exhibit, "Discovering the Civil War," featured in the Lawrence F. O'Brien Gallery through September 6, 2010.



Wednesday, May 26, at noon
William G. McGowan Theater

John Brown's Trial

John Brown hoped to incite the slaves in Virginia to a rebellion when he attacked the armory and arsenal at Harpers Ferry in 1859. Historians have credited this raid with rousing the country and accelerating the onset of the Civil War. In *John Brown's Trial*, author Brian McGinty argues that the actual turning point was Brown's trial and not the raid. Brown eloquently argued the case against slavery in a trial that reverberated around the world and made him a martyr to the cause of freedom. A book signing will follow the program.

Note: Mr. McGinty will be our speaker at the October 2011 meeting.



**Houston Civil War Round Table
P. O. Box 4215
Houston, TX 77210-4215**