



# General Orders

## Rains' Regiment

Vol. 22  
No. 9  
Apr.  
2011

[www.houstoncivilwar.com](http://www.houstoncivilwar.com)



**APRIL 2011 MEETING**  
**Thursday, April 21, 2011**

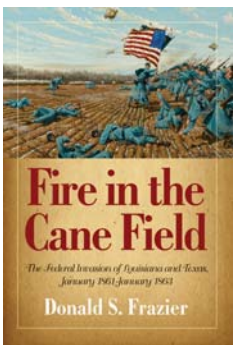
**The Briar Club**  
**2603 Timmons Lane @ Westheimer**  
**6:00 Cash Bar**  
**7:00 Dinner & Meeting**

**E-Mail Reservation is Preferred;**  
at [drzuckero@sbcglobal.net](mailto:drzuckero@sbcglobal.net)  
or call **Don Zuckero at (281) 479-1232**  
by 6 PM on Monday Apr. 18, 2011  
**Dinner \$33; Lecture Only \$5**

**Note: Reservations are required for Lecture Only!**

### The HCWRT PRESENTS

**Donald (Don) S. Frazier**  
**“Fire in the Cane Field: The**  
**Invasion of Louisiana and Texas**  
**January 1861 to January 1863”**



This month we are happy to welcome Don Frazier to Houston as our featured speaker. Don will be sharing a multi-media presentation with us that should provide a special glimpse inside his recently released book about the Union Army presence in Louisiana and Texas from January 1861 through January 1863. We can look forward to hearing Don share stories such as the following.

Helen Dupuy, a French-speaking teenager living at the Sleepy Hollow Plantation on Bayou Lafourche, Louisiana, noted with horror the coming invaders. The first Yankee gunboats passed Donaldsville May 4 at 11 A.M., she wrote in her diary. Her home lay just a few miles from the Mississippi River, and word quickly arrived that Union sailors were confiscating sugar, cotton, and other contraband of war. The realities of her new situation soon became apparent - and ominous: Then began the most awful pillaging.

The Award-winning author returns to the field of Civil War history with keen turn of phrase and enthralling storytelling with the release of *Fire in the Cane Field: The Invasion of Louisiana and Texas, January 1861-January 1863*. Beginning with the spasms of secession in the Pelican State, Frazier weaves a stirring tale of bravado, reaction, and war as he describes the consequences of disunion for the hapless citizens of Louisiana. The army and navy campaigns he portrays weave a tale of the Federal Government's determination to suppress the newborn Confederacy - and nearly succeeding - by putting ever-increasing pressure on its adherents from New Orleans to Galveston. The surprising triumph of Texas troops on their home soil in early 1863 proved to be a decisive reverse to Union ambitions and doomed the region to even bloodier destruction to come.

This bracing new work, ten years in the making, will usher in a chronological string of four books on the Civil War in Louisiana and Texas, as Frazier presents fresh sources on new topics in a series of captivating narratives.

Titles to follow in his innovative Louisiana quadrille include *Thunder Across the Swamp: The Fight for the Lower Mississippi, February - May 1863*; *Blood on the Bayou: The Campaigns of Tom Green's Texans, June 1863 - February 1864*; and *Death at the Landing: The Contest for the Red River and the Collapse of Confederate Louisiana, March 1864 - June 1865*.

### APRIL QUIZ

*By Jim Godlove*

**In August 1862, the newly appointed defender of Louisiana arrived from the east where he had taken part in Stonewall Jackson's Valley Campaign. Though not a West Point graduate, he had been well educated at Harvard and Yale. He had also been at the side of his father, a distinguished army general.**



**Who was his father and who was he?**

## About Donald S. Frazier



Donald S. Frazier is professor of history at McMurry University in Abilene, Texas. He is the award-winning author of three books on the Civil War including *Blood and Treasure* (1996), *Cottonclads* (1998), *Fire in the Cane Field* (2009), and *Thunder Across the Swamp* (2011). His other work includes serving as co-author of *Historic Abilene* (2000), *Frontier Texas* (2004), *Abilene Landmarks* (2009), and *The Texas You Expect* (2007), as well as general editor of *The U.S. and Mexico at War* (1998) and a collection of Civil War letters, published as *Love and War* (2010).

In addition to his teaching duties, Frazier has been very involved in a variety of heritage and cultural tourism projects, including consulting on the development of three museums, two research centers, a Mexican War battlefield, work on Civil War and frontier heritage trails in Texas, New Mexico, and Louisiana, and work on historical projects in Europe and Mexico. He also helped Abilene, Texas achieve recognition as a Preserve America city and grant recipient. He is the writer and director for the video *Our Home, Our Rights: Texas and Texans in the Civil War*, a winner of the Mitchell Wilder Award for Excellence in Publications and Media Design from the Texas Association of Museums.

Frazier is also active in historic preservation projects. He is currently serving as President and CEO of the McWhiney Foundation, a Texas-based educational non-profit which, among its various activities, manages and preserves the Buffalo Gap Historic Village, a museum that includes a collection of more than a dozen antique buildings. He has served as a consultant with several communities as they develop their heritage and cultural assets, and has been recognized for his efforts by numerous organizations including the American Association for State and Local History, The Texas Historical Foundation, the Historical Society of New Mexico, and the Louisiana Historical Association.

Dr. Frazier has received accolades and honors for his contributions to the historical dialogue in the United States. He was chosen for a military history fellowship at the

United States Military Academy at West Point, a fellowship at the University of Edinburgh, Scotland, and is in high demand as a thinker, consultant, and speaker. Frazier is also an elected member of the prestigious Philosophical Society of Texas, the oldest learned organization in the state, as well as the Texas Historical Foundation.



## APRIL BOOK RAFFLE

*By Donnie Stowe*

Spring is here and it feels great outside this time of year. The April book raffle will start with a book about confederate raiders attacking St. Albans, Vermont: ***Burn the Town and Sack the Banks – Confederates Attack Vermont***, by Cathryn J. Prince and is a donation from Adrain Huckabee. Next up is a donated volume from Norm Lewis – ***This Terrible Sound*** by Peter Cozzens. It is a book about the Battle of Chickamauga – where the Army of the Cumberland & the Army of the Tennessee meet on New Year's Eve 1862. Third in the raffle is ***Escape on the PEARL – the Heroic Bid for Freedom on the Underground Railroad*** by Mary Kay Ricks. The final selection is ***My Brother's Face – Portraits of the Civil War*** by Charles Phillips and Alan Axelrod with the Foreword by Brian C. Pohanka.

I wish to continue my thanks and praise to all you members bringing in these marvelous volumes to share with us each meeting. Without this type of support, our meetings would lose a lot of its fun and entertainment. Please keep the HCWRT in mind when you do some of your Spring-cleaning and donate a well-read book or magazine for our raffles.

## COMMANDER'S CORNER

*By David Rains*

Those who attended the March meeting enjoyed an excellent, well-organized, PowerPoint presentation on Confederate coins and other aspects of Civil War money issues by guest speaker James Bevill.

I would like to thank the many members who have responded to my email request concerning membership dues that had not been paid for the current 2010-11 campaign. This was the first year we had not mailed out payment envelopes with the summer issue of the newsletter so some did not realize they had not paid. Again, we appreciate your payments as the dues are necessary to pay speakers expenses and other organizational expenses. We welcome your inputs whether the mail-out envelopes are necessary. Considering the extra time and expense required for these mass mailings it would be our preference to again request

payment in the summer newsletter and then make a more timely email follow up to tardy payees.

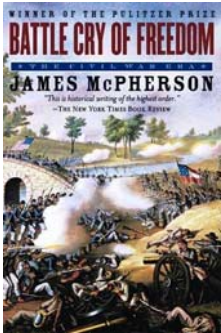
Also, we would appreciate knowing of anyone who is receiving mailed copies of the newsletter and can instead receive by email. Each copy that is printed and mailed costs about \$ 1.00.

Some of our members have voiced a complaint on the cost of dinner for our meetings. I would like to again mention that our organization makes no markup on the meals – we actually pay a little more to the Briar Club than the \$33 charge. Other venues have been explored but the Briar Club still seems best considering location and overall quality of food and services

Please make your April 21 reservations for what I am sure will be a great presentation by Don Frazier from McMurry University in Abilene. He will make a PowerPoint presentation on his book "Fire in the Cane Field: The Invasion of Louisiana and Texas January 1861- January 1863"

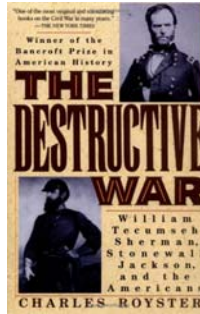
## The Top 12 Civil War Books Ever Written *By Glenn W. LaFantasie*

This month we finish our count down of the Top 12 Civil War books ever written with numbers 3, 2 and 1.



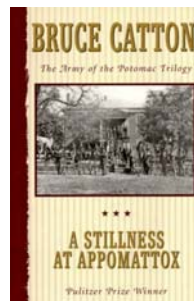
**3. "Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era":** For many people, this is their favorite Civil War book. Awarded the Pulitzer Prize for history in 1989 for this book, James M. McPherson, now a professor emeritus at Princeton University, set out to tell the story of the Civil War in a single (though huge) volume by writing a gripping narrative that relied on eyewitness accounts of the war and on the most recent

scholarship in the field of Civil War studies. He achieved his goal admirably and with great flourish. By any measure, this is the best one-volume history of the war. McPherson's prose shines, even bedazzles, throughout the book, although he's less than agile in making transitions within chapters from one subject to the next, and his writing sometimes grows suddenly dull and weak, only to gain strength by the next chapter. Nonetheless, this is a great book, an epic book -- herculean in size and scope. McPherson's mastery of the war's details alone defies comprehension. It's doubtful that any other historian will come along soon with the necessary talent and energy to write a single-volume history of the war that can match this one in style, content and substance.



**2. "The Destructive War: William Tecumseh Sherman, Stonewall Jackson, and the Americans":** Charles Royster's book is unlike any other I've ever read about the Civil War. For one thing, it's badly subtitled; the main title should have been left to stand on its own. For another, it defies ready description because it offers a nuanced -- and, to a certain degree, a disturbing -- interpretation of the Civil

War. Drawing on an impressive array of primary and secondary sources, Royster, a distinguished professor at Louisiana State University, paints a multilayered and strikingly vibrant portrait of American society in the war years by displaying its true colors -- the war, he argues, in all its destructive and terrible brutality, was precisely the kind of war that the nation's citizens, North and South, wanted (in other words, be careful what you wish for), despite all the lamentations that could be heard as the war grew in intensity and became increasingly more cataclysmal from one battle to the next. But Royster does not stop there. He explains how Americans, who expressed a deep ambivalence in their feelings about the war, could be passively shocked by their own destructiveness and, at the same time, aggressively hopeful that their armies would totally annihilate the enemy, leaving no foe standing by war's end. Still, he points out, Americans on both sides, Northerners and Southerners, exaggerated the actual levels of violence and destruction that occurred during the war, leading subsequent generations to conclude that the Civil War resembled the total warfare of the 20th century. Even so, there was no denying the warrior instincts of generals like Stonewall Jackson and William Tecumseh Sherman, both of whom seem to have thrived on battle and the chaos of war. With lucid prose, and by combining narrative and thematic chapters into an innovative mosaic, Royster unveils a Civil War that is totally at odds with what you've read before or what you think you know about the conflict. Nevertheless, his rendition of the war -- filled with all its complexities, ambiguities, vicarious pleasures, overwhelming miseries, inherent contradictions, violent hyperbole and actual violence -- makes utter sense. The Civil War, in other words, was no simple episode in our nation's history, despite all our efforts to see it only as blue versus gray, brother against brother. The book, published in 1991, won the Bancroft Prize in American History. It should have won a Pulitzer.



**1. "A Stillness at Appomattox":** My top choice did win a Pulitzer for its author, Bruce Catton. For those who aren't familiar with his works, which are plentiful, he was probably the 20th century's foremost American writer of narrative histories, most of which were about the Civil War. Published in 1953, "A Stillness at Appomattox" details the experiences of the Army of the Potomac during the final year of the war, but it is much more than a

retelling of an often told tale. In fact, one could say this book is a prose poem to the Army of the Potomac and the men who fought in it. As a child growing up in Michigan, Catton knew and spoke to Civil War veterans in his small hometown. Although a good part of his career was spent as a newspaper journalist and columnist, he took up writing Civil War books in the 1950s, became the senior editor of American Heritage magazine, and gained great fame as an author until his death in 1978. Catton wrote not only with a journalist's eye, but also with a novelist's sensibilities (although he only ever published one novel on the Civil War for juvenile readers). Today his name -- and the quality of his work -- is largely forgotten, although Civil War historians and enthusiasts still heap high praise on him for his long list of highly satisfying Civil War books and biographies. "A Stillness at Appomattox" stands out from all the rest of his writings. As this fine book reveals so expressively, Catton forged a trail for later Civil War historians by writing his account of the Army of the Potomac from the point of view of soldiers in the ranks. By means of lilting sentences, adroit portraits of men and their peccadilloes, and iron-hard descriptions of men in battle, Catton turns the Army of the Potomac into more than a mass of men in wartime; his picture of the army and its soldiers convinces you that he was there with them, which of course he wasn't, but you feel that anyway because his narrative carries you back into the world in which those soldiers lived and died. Beneath the surface of Catton's chronicle runs the awful specter of the tolls of war -- how war dehumanizes, stultifies, and yet breeds comradeship, trust and even love among those who wage it. Long before academic historians turned to highlighting the "face of battle" in their military studies of the Civil War, Catton sketched accurately and effectively the dour features of that face. More to his credit, Catton discussed -- in this book and in others -- how slavery was the cause of the war, the plight of slaves and freedmen as the war wore on, and the importance of the Union cause as a driving force behind the determination of Northern soldiers to win the war and reunite the country. This book leaves sharp images lingering in the reader's mind, largely because Catton expertly sets scenes, describes people in human terms, and refuses to disguise the ugly, malevolent and heartless aspects of war. Yet, in the end, the book is surprisingly uplifting, a splendid tale of victory, no doubt because Catton so adeptly uses irony and compassion to tell the Army of the Potomac's story. Walt Whitman once famously said, "the real war will never get in the books." He was wrong. The real war, in all its dimensions, can be luminously found in this, the best book ever written about the Civil War.



## 2010 - 2011 SPEAKERS CAMPAIGN

- Apr 21, 2011** Don Frazier – *“Fire in the Cane Field: The Invasion of Louisiana and Texas January 1861 to January 1863”*
- May 19, 2011** Jack Waugh – *“Maxey and the Indians”*

## 2011 - 2012 SPEAKERS CAMPAIGN

- Sep 16, 2011** Wayne Motts - *“The Seminary Tower at Gettysburg”*
- Oct 20, 2011** Jim Robbins - *“Last in Their Class: Custer, Pickett and the Goats of West Point”*
- Nov 17, 2011** Prof. Susannah Ural - *“Hood and the Texans”*
- Dec 15, 2011** Tom Carhart - *“West Point Civil War Rivalries”*
- Jan 19, 2012** Ed Bearss - *To Be Announced*
- Feb 16, 2012** Stephen Kinnaman - *“The Building of the Alabama”*
- Mar 15, 2012** Carol Berkin - *“Civil War Wives”*
- Apr 19, 2012** Pat Falci - *“A.P. Hill: Lee’s Forgotten General”*
- May 17, 2012** To Be Announced

## [Ancestry.com](http://Ancestry.com) Posts - Civil War files Online WASHINGTON (AP)



WASHINGTON (AP) - The National Archives and Ancestry.com published newly digitized Civil War records online for the first time Wednesday, allowing users to trace family links to the war between North and South.

Nearly 275,000 newly published pages are among the most heavily used documents for research in the National Archives' Civil War holdings, curators said. The pages contain about 3 million names of those who enlisted for a draft from 1863 to 1865, though only about 40,000 were drafted to fight.

Archivists estimate 17 million Americans have an ancestor who fought in the war. Many may not know about their family ties.

Tracing genealogy is becoming a fast-growing hobby and even "fashionable" with a Friday night TV show devoted to celebrity family histories, said Josh Hanna, executive vice president of Ancestry.com. The company sponsors the NBC show and invested \$100 million in digitizing historical records.

"Family history, I can tell you as someone who's been doing this for 15 years now, used to be a hell of a lot harder than it is today," Hanna said. "It's become much faster, easier and cheaper to actually do a lot of this research."

At the Archives, filmmaker Ken Burns revealed a family discovery he made from the Archives records shortly after his 1980s PBS series, "The Civil War." He learned that his great-great-grandfather Abraham Burns was a Confederate soldier, which he called a "stunning discovery."

"He was 5-feet, 4 inches tall and had gray eyes, which I suppose is perfect for a Confederate," Burns said of the details he gleaned from the documents. "He stated to a copyist ... that he was a blacksmith in life and had been 'forced' to join the Confederate Army, which I don't think is quite accurate."

Burns said he traced his ancestor's capture in the newly created state of West Virginia in 1863 and how Abraham Burns was sent to a prison camp until the war ended. Burns thought all records disappeared after his great-great-grandfather was released.

Some of the newly digitized files show, however, that the once enemy captor later applied for a federal pension. That wasn't unusual for Confederate soldiers, Burns said, as most white citizens were welcomed back into society after the bloodiest war.

"This is not just the story of generals and presidents but a bottom-up story of so-called ordinary people who fought on both sides," he said, calling the Archives digitization project a lesson in democracy. "This place is really the ground zero for coming to terms with it."

New York TV anchor Cheryl Wills, who wrote a book about her great-great-great-grandfather Sandy Wills escaping slavery to fight with the U.S. Colored Troops, said she discovered her family connection about 150 years after the Civil War ended.

"I was just goofing around on the Internet - I had no idea what I would find," Wills said.

What she found, though, was an extensive story about how Sandy Wills was sold into slavery at age 10 and later enlisted in Kentucky to fight with five other slave boys who were like brothers. She framed a copy of his military discharge paper.

Later findings weren't so proud. Wills said she found a pension application from Sandy Wills' widow, Emma Wills, which showed a pattern of discrimination against black widows. She was required to fill out a deposition to try to prove where she was born as a former slave and hired a lawyer to try to claim a pension.

"Look at her humble X on the bottom," Wills said, pointing to the signature line. "It kills my heart to see that X

because that's government-imposed illiteracy. ... She just put her mark."

The family history was long forgotten, though, until Wills found the records online.

Newly published Civil War documents also include the names of some famous Americans who enlisted for the draft, including a 27-year-old Andrew Carnegie, A. Montgomery Ward and future President Grover Cleveland.

The digitization project is part of a five-year deal with Provo, Utah-based Ancestry.com worth millions of dollars. The public will have free access beginning Thursday for a week before a subscription is required to access the records.



Archives spokeswoman Susan Cooper said the federal agency doesn't have the money or staff needed to digitize all records itself.

Ancestry offers a 14-day free trial before requiring a paid subscription of \$12.95 to \$19.95 per month. The company has about 1.4 million subscribers who can search about 2 billion names.

Ancestry provides digital images of each record to the Archives free of charge, along with index metadata. After five years, the Archives can use the index and digitized records without any restrictions.

Burns said it's a "win-win" partnership for digitization that would not have otherwise happened in times of a tight federal budget.

On the Net:

<http://www.ancestry.com/civilwar150>



**Lt. Gen. Richard Taylor – From Ancestry.com**

## HOUSTON CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE 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.

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How did you learn about us? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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

**NEW MEMBER**

**RENEWAL**

**\$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



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