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# General Orders

## *Chandler's Brigade*

Vol. 27  
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Sept  
2015

**SEPTEMBER 2015 MEETING**  
**Thursday, September 17, 2015**

The HESS Club  
5430 Westheimer Rd @ Westheimer Way  
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 Sept 14, 2015  
Dinner \$30; Lecture Only \$10

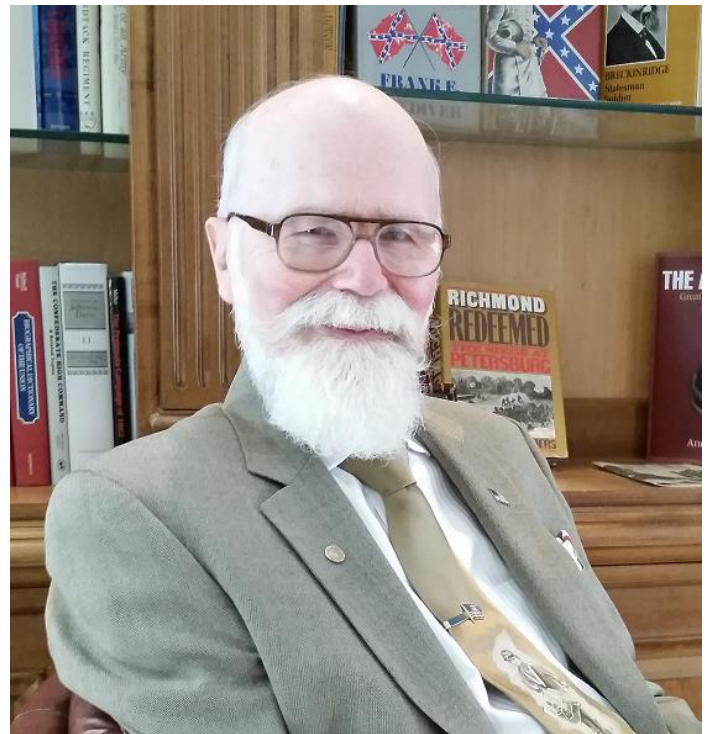
**\*\*\* Reservations are Required \*\*\***  
**FOR BOTH DINNER and LECTURE ONLY**

**The HCWRT Presents**  
**Richard Sommers**  
**Speaking on:**

***Decision at Darbytown: The Final  
Full Fight of Lee's Texans***

Federal forces nearly seized Richmond on September 29, 1864. They broke through the outer defenses at Fort Harrison and came closer to capturing the capital itself than on any other day of the entire Civil War until she was finally abandoned to them without resistance as the Confederacy was collapsing in early April of 1865. Only the heroism of a handful of Graycoats, especially General John Gregg and the Texas Brigade, saved the city in September. Even so, the continuing Yankee threat to the capital caused strategic instability into mid-October. The Southerners initially failed to recapture Fort Harrison with frontal charges on September 30. General Lee waited a week and then launched one of his trade-mark flank attacks to roll up the Union right and shake them out of Fort Harrison.

The resulting First Battle of the Darbytown Road on October 7 proved the last grand attack he would ever initiate in quest of positive offensive victory. It would also mark the final assault of the renowned Texas Brigade. This "Decision at Darbytown" is the opening program of this 2015-2016 season.



### **About Richard Sommers**

Richard J. Sommers served for 43+ years at the U.S. Army Military History Institute/U.S. Army Heritage and Education Center. Even after nominally retiring as the Senior Historian of the Center in January of 2014, he continues teaching in the U.S. Army War College, writing about the Civil War, and speaking to Civil War groups across the nation. He has published over 100 books, articles, chapters, entries, and reviews on the Civil War. His most recent book . the expanded, revised, 150th Anniversary edition of Richmond Redeemed: the Siege at Petersburg .

was published by Savas-Beatie in September, 2014. It was honored by the Army Historical Foundation with a Distinguished Writing Award as the best expanded reprint book of 2014. In May, 2015, he was designated a Distinguished Fellow of the U.S. Army War College, an honor accorded to only one per cent of the approximately 3400 faculty who have taught at that institution since 1950. A graduate of Carleton College with a doctorate from Rice University, he was born and raised in suburban Chicagoland. He and his wife, Tracy, reside in Carlisle, Pennsylvania.

## 2015 Field Trip “On to Atlanta” *By Barry Brueggeman*

Our Fall Field Trip this year will be to Georgia to investigate the 1864 Atlanta Campaign. Dr. Brian Steel Wills gave us a very informative lecture in September on the campaign, and we will be fortunate to have him as our tour guide this fall. Dr. Wills is Director of the Center for the Study of the Civil War Era and Professor of History at Kennesaw State University.

**Thursday, Oct. 29:** Leave Houston IAH on Mesa (United) Airlines at 9:15 a.m., arriving in Atlanta at 12:19 p.m. We will lunch on the way to Kennesaw before visiting the Southern Museum of Civil War and Locomotive History in Kennesaw. After closing the museum, we will have dinner in Kennesaw followed by a lecture by Dr. Wills at the Center for the Study of the Civil War Era at Kennesaw State University. Our hotel for the entire trip will be the Comfort Inn in Kennesaw.

**Friday, Oct. 30:** Breakfast for this day and all others is included at the hotel. After leaving the hotel at 8:00 am we will visit Ringgold Gap, Rocky Face Ridge, Dalton and Dug Gap. After lunch we will visit Snake Creek Gap, Resaca, Kingston, Cassville, and Allatoona Pass. We will return to the hotel at 5:00 pm and have dinner in Kennesaw.

**Saturday, Oct. 31:** We will visit Pickett’s Mill and New Hope Church. After lunch we will tour Dallas, Pine Mountain, Gilgal Church, and Kolb’s Farm. We will return to the hotel at 4:30 pm and have dinner again in Kennesaw.

**Sunday, Nov. 1:** We will visit the Kennesaw Mountain Battlefield, including Visitor Center, Big Kennesaw, and Pigeon Hill. After lunch we will tour the staging area for Cheatham Hill, the Union attack route, and the Confederate defenses. The latter part of the afternoon will be spent in Marietta where we will also have dinner.

**Monday, Nov. 2:** We will depart the hotel at 9:45 am and travel to the Atlanta History Center. Our flight is at 4:45 p.m., and we arrive back at Houston IAH at 6:05 p.m.

Cost of the trip will be \$1400 per person for double-occupancy and \$1600 for single-occupancy. Cost includes coach airfare, hotel, bus transportation, tour guide, admissions, and some meals. You can save your place on the trip by forwarding a \$300 deposit per person (made out to HCWRT) immediately to Barry Brueggeman, 3706 Lonniewood Drive, Houston, TX 77059. Deposits are fully refundable until the complete payments are due by the HCWRT membership meeting on September 17, 2015. If you make your own travel arrangements to meet the tour group in Atlanta, the tour cost can be reduced accordingly.

## SEPTEMBER QUIZ

*By Jim Godlove*

**The first black soldiers to receive the Medal of Honor received them on April 6, 1865. Among them was Sgt. Maj. Milton M. Holland of Texas. They were awarded the medals for their actions at the Battle of New Market Heights (or Chaffin’s Farm) on Sept. 29, 1864. In addition to the Medal of Honor, the Commander of the Army of the James paid to have 197 special medals made which he issued to his troops. The solid silver medal hung from a red, white and blue ribbon. The front read “Distinguished for Courage, Campaign Before Richmond, 1864.” The back read “U S Colored Troops” with a Latin inscription that translated as “Freedom will be theirs by the sword.” This medal was named for the Army of the James commander.**



**Who was this “beastly” Union General?**

**2015 Vandiver Award**  
**Presented to**  
**James McPherson**  
*By Gary Chandler*



Richard Sommers (R)  
presents HCWRT 2015 Vandiver Award to James McPherson

timely fashion, and we greatly appreciate it. Dr. Sommers is the September speaker who will kick off the 2015-16 HCWRT speakers campaign.

Special thanks to Dr. Peter Carmichael, Director of the CWI at Gettysburg College, for his hospitality.



James McPherson (L)  
receives HCWRT 2015 Vandiver Award from Richard Sommers

I reported in our May newsletter that Dr. James M. McPherson, Princeton University Professor Emeritus of History, was selected by the HCWRT as the 2015 recipient of the Frank E. Vandiver Award of Merit. On June 19th at Gettysburg College's Civil War Institute (CWI), HCWRT's representative Dr. Richard Sommers, himself a HCWRT Vandiver recipient (2009) who received his doctorate at Rice under Dr. Vandiver's mentorship, presented the Award to Professor McPherson. Dr. Sommers' remarks highlighted the distinguished career of Dr. McPherson in nearly a half century as a leading historian, educator, Pulitzer Prize-winning author, and preservationist. Accompanying the presentation was the traditional symbol of the Vandiver Award, a beautifully-crafted large wooden facsimile of a Minie Ball. The HCWRT is grateful to Dr. Sommers, who lives near Gettysburg in Carlisle, PA, for arranging the presentation with CWI, making the presentation, and for his enthusiasm for his mentor Frank Vandiver, the Award that bears his name, and our Round Table where Vandiver was one of our earliest organizing members. Richard Sommers was able to make this happen in a place and time when none of the Board members was able to travel to the East Coast to present the award in a

**SEPTEMBER BOOK RAFFLE**  
*By Donnie Stowe*



I hope everyone had a wonderful summer break. For our first meeting of the new campaign the September HCWRT book raffle begins with ***DON'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT THE CIVIL WAR***, by Kenneth C. Davis.

The subtitle of this book is Everything You Need to Know About America's Greatest Conflict but Never Learned and is a donation by our President Gary Chandler. Number two in the raffle is ***DESPERATE ENGAGEMENT*** and has a personalized autograph to Neil Weaver by the author . Marc Leepson. Our third book this month is ***LINCOLN at GETTYSBURG – The Words that Remade America*** by Garry Wills and donated by Jim Godlove. The raffle, this month also includes ***THE BATTLEFIELDS OF THE CIVIL WAR*** by William C. Davis. This book is illustrated with collections of some of the rarest Civil War historical artifacts. For the last volume this month we have ***THROUGH ORDINARY EYES***, Edited with an Introduction by Ella Jane Bruen and Brian M. Fitzgibbons. It is the Civil War Correspondence of Rufus Robbins, Private, 7<sup>th</sup> Regiment, Massachusetts Volunteers.

I want to thank all members for their support in supplying the books and materials for this raffle.

## THE HOUSTON CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE 2015 - 2016 SPEAKERS CAMPAIGN – THE HESS CLUB

- Sept. 17, 2015 - Richard Sommers - *"Decision at Darbytown: The Final Full Fight of Lee's Texans"*
- Oct. 15, 2015 - Richard McCaslin - *"Lost Cause Legacy: Rip Ford and the Rio Grande Expeditionary Force"*
- Nov. 19, 2015 - Rick Eiserman - *"Will the Real Private Joe Joskins Please Step Forward?"*
- Dec. 10, 2015 - Andrew Hall - *"Civil War Blockade Running on the Texas Coast"*
- Jan. 21, 2016 - Edwin C. Bearss - *"The Kentucky Campaign and the Battle of Perryville"*
- Feb. 18, 2016 - Charles Grear - *"In Defense of My Native State—Why Texans Fought"*
- Mar. 17, 2016 - Gary Joiner - *"Union Naval Operations in the Red River Campaign"*
- Apr. 21, 2016 - Caroline Janney - *"Remembering the Civil War: Reunion and the Limits of Reconciliation"*
- May 19, 2016 - Stephen M. Sam Hood - *"The Lost Papers of General John Bell Hood"*

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