



# General Orders

## *Harrington's Brigade*

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



**JANUARY, 2021 MEETING**  
**Thursday, January 21, 7:00 pm**  
**Fellowship Period from 6:30 to 7:00 pm**

**Virtual Meeting Via Zoom**  
**(please refer to article on page 3 of**  
**September's newsletter for detailed**  
**information regarding using Zoom)**

### The HCWRT Presents Danny Sessums Speaking on:

***“Arkansas Post: Yeah, and a Heck of a Git you Got”***

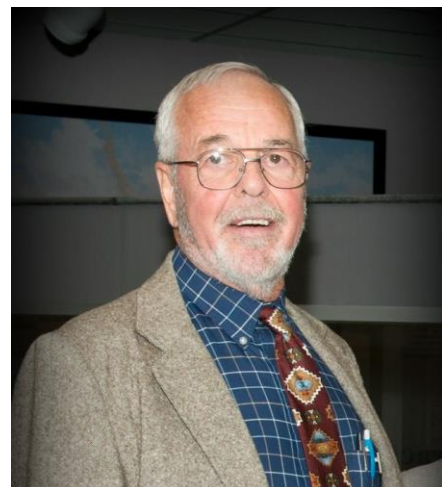
The Federal army's campaign to take Arkansas out of the Confederacy began in early 1862, after the Federals had driven Confederate and Missouri State Guard troops from Missouri. By early September, following two unsuccessful Federal incursions, the Confederate command in Arkansas recognized that an amphibious enemy force might sweep up the undefended Arkansas River valley from the Mississippi and capture Little Rock, the capital of Arkansas.

Initially, the Confederates had forwarded a single brigade of Texans (infantry and dismounted cavalry) to Pine Bluff, and from thence on southeastward to reach a position on the Arkansas River, fifty miles above its confluence with the Mississippi, known locally as the “Post of Arkansas” or simply the “Post.” Within weeks, a second Texas brigade marched to bolster the first. Under Brig. Gen. Thomas Churchill, slaves and detailed soldiers began building a four-bastion earthen fort at the Post known formally as Fort Hindman. Built high on a

bluff overlooking the great bend of the river, the fort was intended to provide a base for disrupting Federal shipping on the Mississippi as well as protecting the interior of Arkansas from Federal penetration.

Meanwhile, Maj. Gen. John A. McClernand started down the Mississippi with a large command, with the professed aim of helping Ulysses S. Grant with the reduction of Vicksburg. Following a disastrous Union defeat north of that city in late December 1862, this politically ambitious general cast about for some way to bolster his career; and he eventually settled upon leading a combined army-navy movement against the Post of Arkansas rather than Vicksburg as McClernand had led his friend Lincoln to believe. Afterwards, General Grant would caustically term McClernand's movement a “wasted expedition.”

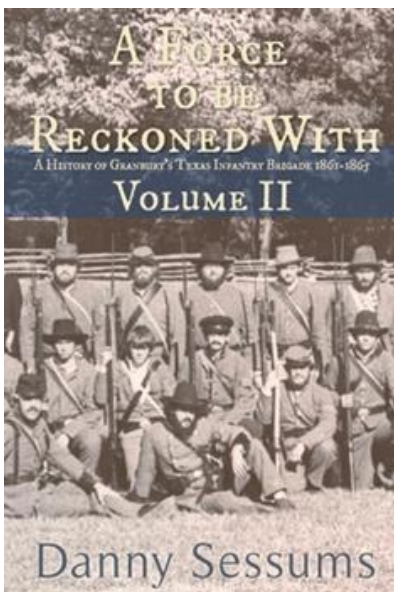
After hastily boarding his own corps and Maj. Gen. William T. Sherman's on a flotilla of 62 transports, on January 4, 1863, McClernand's mighty force steamed upstream, headed for the Post of Arkansas. Late in the afternoon of January 9, Union boats began landing troops near Notrebe's Plantation just three miles below



*Dr. Danny Sessums*

the Post. The next day, the Union's overwhelming force moved upriver to invest Fort Hindman.

Dr. Sessums will discuss the resultant Confederate disaster, a defensive battle which was predominantly fought by the "Texians" trapped within the fort. Even before firing commenced in earnest, the badly outnumbered defenders of Fort Hindman knew they were about to become embroiled in a nightmarish event, having been ordered to "hold out . . . until all are killed." Thomas Chambers, a Rebel lieutenant, conceded as much in a letter he somehow managed to compose as the battle moved toward its climax. Chambers wrote: ". . . I am determined to fight them to the death."



## About Dr. Danny Sessums

A proud native of the oil refinery town of Borger in the Texas Panhandle, Dr. Danny Sessums majored in anthropology as an undergraduate at Texas Tech University. After graduating from Texas Tech, Danny changed his academic focus from anthropology to history. To that end, Danny undertook graduate work in U.S. history at U.T. Arlington in 1981-1984, and during 1983-1987 he studied antebellum history at Louisiana State University, where he received his Ph.D.

Dr. Sessums' postdoctoral career combined museum work with teaching U.S. history at the following: Port Hudson Commemorative Area,

1983-1986; Old Fort Museum & Western-Arkansas Community College, 1986-1990; and Museum of the Gulf Coast and Assistant Professor, Lamar University – Port Arthur, 1990-1998. Subsequently, he served as: Associate Professor at Arkansas State University, 1998-2001; Director, George Ranch History Park, Fort Bend County, 2001-2002; and Director, Museum of the Gulf Coast/Houston Baptist University, 2002-2009. Following his retirement from HBU, Dr. Sessums and his wife Candace relocated to the Tyler area, where they live today.

In 2017, Dr. Sessums published volume I of *A Force to be Reckoned With (A History of Granbury's Texas Infantry Brigade, 1861-1865)*, and last year he published the second and concluding volume of this definitive study of General Hiram B. Granbury's Texans. *A Force to be Reckoned With* represents the culmination of Danny's research into this distinguished brigade that began with his doctoral dissertation more than 30 years ago.

Dr. Sessums has also taken an active role in multiple Civil War re-enactments, and he served as a historical advisor to the director of the acclaimed Civil War film *Glory*.

Most of the regiments that were later formed into Granbury's Brigade were present at Arkansas Post when it fell to the Federals in January 1863. With his intimate knowledge of that brigade, Danny Sessums is especially qualified to address our Round Table on the subject of his upcoming talk, "Arkansas Post."



*HCWRT members at 2019 Jefferson Symposium*



## COMMANDER'S CORNER

*By Mike Harrington*

I hope each of you had a joyous holiday season. With any luck, 2021 will prove to be an improvement upon 2020 in multiple respects. In particular, the new year should witness our Round Table's resumption of in-person dinner meetings, although the exact timing is currently unpredictable. Nonetheless, I want to assure you that our Board of Directors is dedicated to the restoration of in-person meetings over cocktails and dinner as soon as practicable.

While we are still meeting virtually, I invite you to take advantage of a new feature of our Zoom meetings. At the suggestion of our Treasurer, Barry Brueggeman, **commencing with our January meeting, we will open the meeting at 6:30 p.m. to allow for a half hour of fellowship and informal talk among our members prior to the start of the meeting at 7 o'clock.** Feel free to log into the meeting at any time during this half-hour session to find out what your fellow members have been up to recently.

We will kick off 2021 with a talk from Dr. Danny Sessums about the Battle of Arkansas Post, one of the more consequential battles fought in the generally overlooked Trans-Mississippi Theater of the Civil War. For quite some time now, our Board has attempted to balance presentations on the Eastern or the so-called Western Theaters of the war with talks about events west of the Mississippi.

## THIS MONTH IN CIVIL WAR HISTORY

**January 1, 1863** – Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation goes into effect

**January 5, 1861** – US Senators from seven Southern states meet in Washington, D. C. to discuss secession

**January 9, 1861** – The *Star of the West* fails to relieve Ft. Sumter

**January 9 to 11, 1863** – The Battle of Arkansas Post (Fort Hindman), Arkansas

**January 15, 1865** – Ft. Fisher (North Carolina) stormed

**January 19, 1862** – Battle of Mill Springs (Logan's Cross Roads), Kentucky

**January 22, 1862** – Bombardment of Ft. Henry, Tennessee by *USS Lexington*

**January 25, 1863** – Burnside relieved of command of the Army of the Potomac and replaced with Major General Joseph Hooker

**January 27, 1864** – Engagement at Fair Gardens (Kelly's Ford), Tennessee

**January 30, 1862** – The *USS Monitor* is launched at Greenpoint, New York



## MEMBERSHIP REPORT

*By Walker Agnew*

As we continue with the Zoom format for our meetings, this still provides us a chance to reach out to friends and invite them to join us for our presentations. We continue to have top notch speakers who have spent many years in this field, and are the lucky recipients of their hard work. The Houston Civil War Round Table has gained new membership even with these changes. We all look forward to meeting together in person sometime next year!

A personal invitation is still the best way to get the word out. Let me know of any ideas you may have for the membership committee. My email address is [walkeragnew@comcast.net](mailto:walkeragnew@comcast.net).

## 2020 - 2021 SPEAKERS CAMPAIGN

Jan. 21, 2021	Danny Sessums: <i>"Arkansas Post"</i>
Feb. 18, 2021	Lorien Foote: <i>"The Dogs of War"</i> (rescheduled from April 16, 2020)
Mar. 18, 2021	Timothy B. Smith: <i>"The Real Horse Soldiers: Benjamin Grierson's Epic 1863 Civil War Raid Through Mississippi"</i>
Apr. 15, 2021	Stephen Kinnaman: <i>"Merrimack: Biography of a Steam Frigate"</i> (rescheduled from March 19, 2020)
May 20, 2021	Don Frazier: <i>"Tempest Over Texas"</i>

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