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General Orders

Altavilla's Brigade

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DECEMBER 2023 MEETING
Thursday, December 14, 2023

Rudi Lechner's Restaurant
2503 South Gessner Road
6:00 (or sooner) Dinner
7:00 Program Begins

E-mail reservations are preferred. Please
e-mail Barry Brueggeman at
hgbrueg@aol.com or call 281 480-1130
by 6 pm Monday, December 11, 2023

***** Reservations are Required *****

There is no cost for dues-paid members.
\$10.00 charge for visitors.

The HCWRT Presents
Dru Sanders speaking on:

“Civil War Texas in Matamoros”

“Civil War Texas in Matamoros, Mexico” follows the contours of war across national boundaries. Arguing that trade was the central point of contention in Civil War Texas, Dru Sanders’ presentation looks to the nexus of that trade, Matamoros, where merchants from Mexico, the United States, and Europe competed and collaborated to reap the benefits of wartime border commerce.

While distant federal governments found it difficult to exercise their goals on the border,

wealthy merchant capitalists successfully juggled the realities of war to profitably participate in the Atlantic trade in cotton grown by enslaved people. For these merchants, loyalty and identity were fluid and contingent on circumstance, and they took advantage of their evolving postures towards different governments. While capitalism generally rests on trust, this situation was built on precariousness. The merchant class of Matamoros learned how to thrive in the space between competing legal systems, both by engaging in shady commerce and by seeking state compensation when their bets failed.



Dru Sanders

About Dru Sanders

Dru Sanders is a PhD candidate at Rice University. He completed a Bachelor's degree at Hampshire College in Amherst, Massachusetts, and a Master's degree at Norwich University in Northfield, Vermont. Prior to coming to Rice, he taught at the Windward School in White Plains, New York. Dru's research interests include the nineteenth-century U.S., slavery and capitalism, the U.S. - Mexico borderlands, and the Civil War in an international context.

PRESIDENT'S POST

By Keith Altavilla

I hope everyone had a good time with our November speaker Barbara Gannon, not only for her talk on the Grand Army of the Republic, but also on what was happening at Olustee in Florida. Hopefully we will receive updates from her in the future. This month, our presenter is Dru Sanders of Rice University, the first recipient (hopefully of many) of our Graduate Student Award. There is a lot of great work being done by the next generation of scholars in the Houston area, and I'm glad our Round Table is playing a role in supporting that.

If you are still in need of gifts, the monthly book raffle is a good place to look. We have offered quite a few good books; you also have the satisfaction of contributing to the Round Table through purchasing raffle tickets. These can even work as gifts for other people, once you have stuffed your own stocking, of course!

As we near the end of 2023, this is another great time to bring a friend or two to our meetings. Even if you don't necessarily have someone in mind, please pick up a few of our pamphlets and cards to pass out to anyone you think might have an interest in the HCWRT, especially if you encounter them at one of however many holiday parties you are invited to attend. Remember that all new members who sign up after January 1 are covered for the rest of this campaign, and all of the next year as well.

A merry Christmas and happy holidays to everyone, and for those who are unable to attend this month's meeting, I cannot wait to see you again in 2024!



HCWRT members attending Hood's Texas Brigade Association, Re-Activated Scholarly Seminar held last month in Kerrville. From left, Ed Cotham, Donnie Stowe, Thad Fine, John Stevens, Don Zuckero, Scott Wilkey, and Neil Weaver. Also in attendance (but not in photo) were Candy Cotham, Anne Marie Fine, and Don Zuckero's grandson Dominick Zuckero.

BOOK RAFFLE

By Rita Campbell

The HCWRT has a real holiday treat for our members! The three-volume set of **LEE'S LIEUTENANTS** by Douglas Southall Freeman will be our silent auction item this month

Starting off with our raffle books, we're offering **THE CIVIL WAR ARCHIVE: THE HISTORY OF THE CIVIL WAR IN DOCUMENTS** by Henry Steele Commager and Erik Bruun, donated by Gladys Glover. Next, we have **THE CONFEDERACY'S GREATEST CAVALRYMAN: THE LIFE OF NATHAN BEDFORD FORREST** by Brian Steel Wills, which is a "must read." We're also offering a new book, **THE CAMPAIGN AND BATTLE OF SECOND MANASSAS** by John Hennessey. Next is **MORGAN'S RAIDERS** by Dee Alexander Brown. Last but not least is **BATTLE ON THE BAY: THE CIVIL WAR STRUGGLE FOR GALVESTON** by our own Ed Cotham.

THIS MONTH IN CIVIL WAR NAVAL HISTORY

By Stephen Kinnaman

December 8, 1861 – The Confederate cruiser *Sumter*, commanded by Commander Raphael Semmes, captured the American whaling baroque *Ebenezer Dodge* in the mid-Atlantic. She was his fifteenth prize since running the blockade from New Orleans in late June. After capturing two more ships in the Strait of Gibraltar, Semmes laid up *Sumter*, deeming her unseaworthy. His next command: the famous raider *Alabama*.

December 14, 1863 – Confederate General Beauregard ordered Lt. George Dixon to commence operations at the entrance of Charleston's harbor with the submarine *H. L. Hunley* and "sink and destroy any vessel of the enemy which he can come in conflict." Two months later, *Hunley* torpedoed the Union blockader *Housatonic*, the first warship to be sunk in combat by a submarine. *Hunley* didn't survive the action, but over a century after her loss, her hull was recovered and is being preserved in Charleston, S. C.

December 20, 1864 – At sunset of this day, Rear Admiral Farragut's flag was hauled down from the masthead of the U. S. Steam Sloop *Hartford* at the New York Navy Yard. It marked the end of the active Civil War careers of both the admiral and the ship, whose names are entwined by their many months of heroic service together. "Damn the torpedoes, full speed ahead."



DECEMBER QUIZ

By Jim Godlove



Three Months in the Southern States was published in England in 1863. The author crossed into Texas from Matamoros and travelled throughout the Confederacy, eventually witnessing the Battle of Gettysburg. He met with many famous people including Sam Houston, Joe Johnston, Braxton Bragg, P.G.T. Beauregard, President Davis, James Longstreet, and R. E. Lee. Who was this British officer?

MEMBERSHIP REPORT

By Michael Clennan

Happy Holidays to all of our Civil War history "buffs." Now is the time for all of us to reach out to our friends and old members and invite them to our December 14 dinner at Rudi's and the 7:00 pm program which follows.

This is a great opportunity to access our special fellowship and educational events for all of 2024! Please consider joining now for the new year!

Also, please be sure to RSVP with Barry no later than 6:00 pm on Monday, December 11.

Let's celebrate together with some hearty German food and beverages. Enjoy our enlarged book raffle and fun Civil War quiz! There is always room for more guests. Should you have any questions, feel free to give me a call at (713) 864-1204.

2023 – 2024 SPEAKERS CAMPAIGN

Dec. 14, 2023	Dru Sanders, Graduate Student Award Recipient: “Civil War Texas In Matamoros”
Jan. 18, 2024	Richard McCaslin: “Lee in the Shadow of Washington”
Feb. 15, 2024	Chris Mackowski, 2023 Vandiver Award Recipient: “Grant’s Next Chapter: Vicksburg, Chattanooga, and the Rise of U. S. Grant”
Mar. 21, 2024	Fay Yarbrough: “Choctaw Confederates: The American Civil War in Indian Country”
Apr. 18, 2024	Stephen Kinnaman: “The Abandonment and Destruction of the Gosport Navy Yard”
May 16, 2024	TBA: 2024 Vandiver Award Recipient

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