
NEWSLETTER

Vol. XXII No. 2

Society of Civil War Historians

Spring 2009

A Message from the President

It is my great pleasure to greet you as the new president of the Society of Civil War Historians. Although I suppose our fall election was somewhat overshadowed by that other campaign, the first contested election in the Society's twenty-plus-year history saw a good voter turnout and an orderly transition.

Although I don't believe I have to swear an oath as president—at least no one's told me about that yet, nor, I might add, has George shown me the secret handshake—I re-read, instead, the "Welcome" statement on the SCWH website, hosted by the George and Anne Richards Civil War Center at Penn State. It declares that we are "an association of scholars dedicated to exploring slavery, the sectional crisis, Civil War, emancipation, and reconstruction," as well as "the legacies of the conflict that continue to have an impact on society today." By encouraging "scholarly activity and academic exchange" among academic and public historians and students, we aim "to bring greater coherence to the historical field by encouraging the integration of social, military, political, and other forms of history and generally to promote the study of the Civil War era." That's a pretty good statement of purpose for an organization like ours and it will, as it did for past presidents, shape the programs sponsored by the Society over the next four years.

We intend, of course, to follow up our extremely successful first conference in Philadelphia with our second conference in Richmond. Matt Gallman has accepted my invitation to chair the program committee for the 2010 conference. He's assembled an excellent group, and the call for papers appears elsewhere in the newsletter. In addition, we'll continue to meet at the Southern Historical Association, which this year will be in Louisville. One of my first jobs as president was to organize a program for our annual luncheon; to help the Society honor the bicentennial of Abraham Lincoln's birth in 2009, I invited Orville Vernon Burton and Mark Neely to reflect on their experiences speaking and writing about Lincoln in the context of the national commemoration.

But I also anticipate several new initiatives:

•The most exciting is the long-awaited creation of a "new" book award. George Rable and Anne Bailey have coordinated efforts to establish the Tom Watson Brown

**\$50,000 Tom Watson Brown
Book Award to be given in 2010**
(Details on page three)

Book Award. Funded by the Watson-Brown Foundation in Georgia, the first \$50,000 annual award will be presented at the SCWH banquet at the 2010 Southern Historical Association for a book published in 2009. More information on the award can be found on page three in the newsletter.

•In the absence of any kind of coherent national effort—at least so far—I would like the Society to have some sort of role in the commemoration of the Sesquicentennial of the Civil War, which will begin during the third year of my term. This may be as simple as creating a national speaker's bureau that schools and other organizations could access; we may also choose to do something more elaborate. I'd love to hear your ideas about an appropriate and interesting way for SWCH to participate.

•I'd also like us to attract more SCWH members and subscribers to *Civil War History* by reaching out to other organizations and H-Net discussion groups. For that I need your help. Later in the year you'll receive an email from me containing a message you can adapt and submit to other H-Net groups, forward to other organizations to which you belong, or share with colleagues and students.

•We're also in the process of revising somewhat the SCWH by-laws, which we hope to have finished by the time we meet in Louisville in November.

As we move ahead on these and other projects, I look forward to working with our excellent Advisory Board—at-large members Lesley Gordon, Will Greene, and Joan Waugh; past presidents Gary Gallagher, Mike Parrish, and George Rable; and Secretary-Treasurer Steve Engle, newsletter editor Anne Bailey, and *Civil War History* editor and conference administrator Bill Blair—and with all of you to maintain and to build on the accomplishments of the past several years. I hope to see all of you in Louisville next fall—we're reserving a little extra time after the SCWH luncheon for you to ask me questions and make suggestions—but in the meantime don't hesitate to contact me with your ideas and comments about the Society. I can be reached at james.marten@marquette.edu.

—James Marten

BOOKS IN REVIEW

Stephen D. Engle, *Book Review Editor*

Peter Cozzens. *Shenandoah 1862: Stonewall Jackson's Valley Campaign*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008. Pp. 640. \$35.00.

Peter Cozzens has again produced a definitive account of a major Civil War campaign. As he did in his splendid chronicles of Stones River, Chickamauga, and Chattanooga, he has now written the most comprehensive study yet of Stonewall Jackson's operations in the fabled Shenandoah Valley. Unlike Robert Tanner's heretofore authoritative history of the campaign, an unabashedly Southern portrayal, Cozzens seeks to "give equal voice to both Union and Confederate sources" (2-3), a goal he attains admirably.

Naturally, "Old Jack" is the major figure—it was, after all, his campaign to win or lose—yet Cozzens appraises the general's performance with evenhanded criticism. While questioning the constant secrecy with which Jackson left his subordinates endlessly perplexed, and his piecemeal employment of forces at Port Republic, Cozzens praises Stonewall's tactical brilliance. His portraits of Union leaders are balanced and complete. Thanks to excellent use of soldiers' accounts, battle descriptions are so vivid that one feels present on the battlefield. These alone make the book a delightful read.

Lloyd A. Hunter, Franklin College (Emeritus)

Stacey Jean Klein. *Margaret Junkin Preston, Poet of the Confederacy: A Literary Life*. Columbia: Univ. of South Carolina Press, 2007. Pp. 137. \$29.95.

The life of Margaret Junkin Preston provides a telling narrative of how nineteenth-century female writers struggled to create a voice in the public world of letters. After Preston's adopted state of Virginia seceded from the Union and her husband, John Preston, left for war, she used poetry to inspire support for the Confederate cause. While earlier she had struggled to reconcile her literary career with the expected domestic and maternal responsibilities of women, she found the environment of Confederate nationalism welcomed female writers into the public light. At the war's end, she shifted her attention to supporting the Lost Cause cultural movement that sought to venerate the defeated Confederacy and romanticize the Old South. Strengthened by the inclusion of several of Preston's poems, Klein's work offers a fascinating look into the role female writers played in shaping the literary ethos of the South during and after the Civil War.

Victoria E. Ott, Birmingham-Southern College

Earl J. Hess. *Trench Warfare under Grant and Lee: Field Fortifications in the Overland Campaign*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007. Pp. 313. \$39.95.

This book is the second volume in Earl Hess's examination of field works in the eastern theater during the Civil War, and it details the enhanced use of earthen fortifications in the spring 1864 battles of the Wilderness, Spotsylvania, North Anna, Cold Harbor, and, at least intimated, Petersburg. Wonderfully researched and well-written, Hess provides detailed descriptions of these battles and how defensive entrenchments evolved from rude ditches and hastily laid-down logs at the Wilderness to deep trenches by Cold Harbor. Hess gives interesting comments on the strategies of Grant and Lee, the morale of troops, and the role of engineers. Grant in particular is singled out for both praise and blame: Grant misread the morale of Lee's troops, was unaware that he had sapped the fighting spirit of his own men, and drew up dubious battle plans. In the end, Hess decides that Grant's strategy was better than earlier Union performances because it took away Lee's offensive capabilities and actually cost fewer lives. Military historians should enjoy this book for its battle detail and its appendix (which illustrates the entrenchments deployed.) General readers might have more trouble, but the excellent conclusion should be widely read and considered by historians of this era.

James L. Huston, Oklahoma State University

The *SCWH Newsletter* is published quarterly. Regular dues are \$50.00 and include the newsletter and a subscription to *Civil War History*. Dues should be forwarded to the Executive Secretary, Stephen D. Engle, Department of History, Box 3091, Florida Atlantic University, Boca Raton, FL 33431-0991. Tel. 561-297-2444. E-mail: engle@fau.edu.
Editor: Anne J. Bailey, Department of History, Geography, and Philosophy, Georgia College & State University, Box 47, Milledgeville, GA 31061. Tel. 478-445-3519. E-mail: anne.bailey@gcsu.edu.
President/Director: James Marten, Department of History, P.O. Box 1881, Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53201-1881. E-mail: james.marten@marquette.edu.
Advisory Board: Anne J. Bailey, Georgia College & State University; William A. Blair, Pennsylvania State University; Stephen D. Engle, Florida Atlantic University; Gary W. Gallagher, University of Virginia; Lesley J. Gordon, University of Akron; A. Wilson Greene, Pamplin Historical Park and the National Museum of the Civil War Soldier; T. Michael Parrish, Baylor University; Joan Waugh, University of California, Los Angeles.

SCWH ANNOUNCES THE TOM WATSON BROWN BOOK AWARD

Thanks to the initiative and generosity of Tad Brown of the Watson-Brown Foundation of Thomson, Georgia, the SCWH is proud to announce the Tom Watson Brown Book Award. Beginning in 2010 (for a book published in 2009), the \$50,000 prize will be awarded annually to the author of the outstanding book on the causes, conduct, and effects, broadly defined, of the Civil War. All genres of scholarship within the field will be eligible, including, but not exclusive to monographs, synthetic works presenting original interpretations, and biographies. Works of fiction, poetry, and textbooks will not be considered. Jurors will consider nominated works' scholarly and literary merit as well as the extent to which they make original contributions to our understanding of the period.

The following information about the Watson-Brown Foundation is adapted from its website at <http://watson-brown.org/index.html>. Walter J. Brown, a Georgia journalist and broadcaster, established the Watson-Brown Foundation in honor of his father J. J. Brown and his wife's grandfather, Thomas E. Watson, primarily to provide college scholarships for underprivileged high school students. Today, the Foundation makes annual awards of more than \$1 million in merit and need-based college scholarships to students from the Central Savannah River Area of Georgia and South Carolina. The Foundation also awards a year-long residential fellowship at the University of South Carolina for a graduate student in southern studies, as well as a number of short-term grants to scholars conducting research in local repositories.

In addition, the Foundation operates historic house museums in Thomson, Georgia—the Thomas E. Watson Birthplace, the Thomas E. Watson House, and Hickory Hill—as well as the T. R. R. Cobb House in Athens. The Foundation provides additional support for historic preservation in part through its Junior Board of Trustees, high school students who grant annual awards totaling \$25,000 to worthy projects and organizations in the region. Finally, the Watson-Brown Foundation operates the Monroe Kimbrel Gardens, a four-acre site offering environmental educational opportunities for area students.

George Rable, Charles G. Summersell, Professor of Southern History at the University of Alabama and the immediate past-president of the SCWH, will chair the first prize jury. The other members are Elizabeth Leonard, John J. and Cornelia V. Gibson Professor of History at Colby College, and Peter Carmichael, Eberly Family Professor of Civil War Studies at West Virginia University. Publishers are asked to send nominated books (only those published in 2009 will be considered) directly to the jurors and to the Foundation no later than

January 1, 2010. The winner will be announced by August 1, 2010. The award will be presented at the SCWH banquet during the Southern Historical Association meeting, where the winner will deliver a formal address that will be published in a subsequent issue of *Civil War History*.

Nominated books should be sent to:

George Rable

2927 Hawthorne Circle
Tuscaloosa, AL 35406

Elizabeth Leonard

3 Cedar Street
Waterville, ME 04901

Peter Carmichael

308 Euclid Avenue
Morgantown, WV 26501

Tad Brown, President

Watson-Brown Foundation, Inc.
310 Tom Watson Way
Thomson, GA 30824

NEW SERIES ANNOUNCED BY SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY PRESS

Southern Illinois University Press announces the launch of a new book series entitled "Legal History of the Civil War Era." Covering the period from the Mexican War to Jim Crow, the series will explore legal history from several different angles, including presidential leadership, legislative mandates, and judicial interpretation. Volumes will also consider how society at large debated, reacted to, and shaped legal development. Broad topics include, but are not limited to, slavery, abolitionism, the Republican party, civil liberties during wartime, war powers, economic development and modernization, the expansion of the federal government, Confederate legal history, the redefinition of American citizenship, changes in legal thought and education, suffrage movements, race relations, case studies, judicial biographies, Native Americans, African Americans and the Union military, rights developments during Reconstruction, and the rise of Jim Crow. For more information on the series, or to submit a proposal, please contact the series editor, Christian G. Samito, at e-mail CGS1865@aol.com.

CALL FOR PAPERS

The Society of Civil War Historians will host a conference from June 17 through 19, 2010, at the Marriott Richmond in Richmond, Virginia. The SCWH welcomes panel proposals or individual papers on the Civil War era, broadly defined. The goal of the conference is to promote the integration of social, military, political, and other forms of history on the Civil War era among historians, graduate students, and professionals who interpret history in museums, national parks, archives, and other public facilities. The deadline for receipt of proposals is September 15, 2009. Proposals should include a title and abstract for the papers (approximately 250-300 words) and a short curriculum vitae of participants. Panel submissions should have an overall title and statement about the thrust of the session. Submit all proposals to Dr. William Blair, Director, Richards Civil War Era Center, The Pennsylvania State University, 108 Weaver Building, University Park, PA 16802. You may e-mail your proposal to the RichardsCenter@psu.edu. The website is found at <http://www.richardscenter.psu.edu> and the telephone number is (814) 863-0151. Final decisions on panels will be made at the annual meeting of the Southern Historical Association in Louisville. The program committee consists of J. Matthew Gallman, chair, assisted by Carol Reardon, Wendy Venet, Aaron Sheehan-Dean, and Thavolia Glymph.

Check out the SCWH webpage

The Society of Civil War Historians is now on the web. Go to the SCWH site at:

scwh.la.psu.edu/

Click on publications to see the newsletter and the journal. You may also go to Project Muse to find the articles included in the journal, *Civil War History*, on the web.

April 29 - The first major event commemorating the sesquicentennial of the Civil War will take place at the University of Richmond. For more information, go to www.viriniacivilwar.org/2009conference.php.

May 16 - The Tenth Annual meeting of the Historians of the Civil War Western Theater will take place in Nashville, Tennessee, at the Hampton Inn and Suites, Vanderbilt-Elliston. For more information contact John Marszalek at johnmarsz@yahoo.com or Michael Ballard at mballard@library.msstate.edu.

Annual Meeting Dates/Sites

2009 - November 5-8
[Marriott Louisville Downtown](#)
Louisville, Kentucky

2010 - November 4-7
[Westin Charlotte](#)
Charlotte, North Carolina

2011 - October 27-30
[Sheraton Baltimore City Center](#)
Baltimore, Maryland

2012 - November 1-4
[Renaissance Riverview Plaza Hotel](#)
Mobile, Alabama

2013 - October 31 - November 3
[Millennium Hotel St. Louis](#)
St. Louis, Missouri

2014 - November 13-16
[Hilton Atlanta](#)
Atlanta, GA