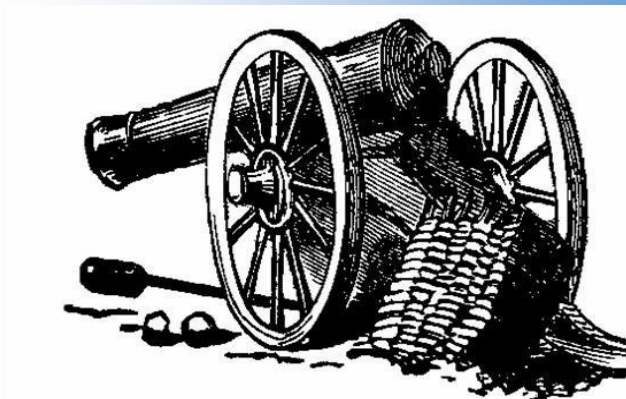


The Grapeshot

Newsletter

December
2020



This month's guest presenter:

Dr. Curt Fields



Please help us welcome Dr. Curt Fields, a multi-degreed educator, former Memphis, TN Police Officer, and Life Saving Medal recipient from the City of Memphis. He will be portraying Ulysses S. Grant in "Captain Grant: From Failure to Colonel".

Follow us on [Facebook](#)

Presented through Zoom

December 8, 2020

6 pm

About Our Speaker

SCOTTSDALE CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE MEETING TUESDAY, DECEMBER 8 AT 6PM
Curt Fields will appear as U.S. Grant at the next meeting of the Scottsdale Civil War Roundtable to be held on Zoom on December 8, 2020 at 6pm. Dr. Fields will portray "Captain Grant: From Failure To Colonel"; the years from Grant's resignation from the U.S. Army 1854 to his obtaining a commission in the Union Army in 1861. As a Living Historian, Dr. Fields is renowned for his portrayal of General (and President) Grant, including portraying the General at the 150th Sesquicentennial observations of: Fort Donelson and Shiloh, TN, Vicksburg, MS, and at the 150th anniversary of Lee's surrender to Grant at Appomattox Court House, VA, in 2015 as well as in the Visitor Center film that is shown at Appomattox Court House National Historic Park. Dr. Fields also portrays General Grant, giving his life story, on the Civil War Trust website. Dr. Fields holds a Bachelor and Master's degrees in Education from the University of Memphis. He later earned a Master's degree in Secondary Education and Ph.D. in Educational Administration and Curriculum from Michigan State University. He served as a Memphis, TN, Police Officer for four years; was an MPD Hostage negotiator and received the Life-Saving medal from the City of Memphis for actions in the line of duty.

ZOOM Meeting Details:

Join Zoom Meeting <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84900847764?pwd=eHpPZXlyZzE3QzBXcnE4S0xkMXFMdz09>

Meeting ID: 849 0084 7764

Passcode: 174279

SCOTTSDALE CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE SPEAKERS 2020-21

All meetings at 6PM on dates below and via Zoom until further notice.

December 8 - Curt Fields as “US Grant”

Jan 19 - Steven Ramold, “Obstinate Heroism: Confederate Surrenders After Appomattox”

Feb 16 - A Wilson Greene, “Crossing the James and the Attack on Petersburg”

March 16 - Chris DeRose, “The Presidents’ War”

April 20 - Frank O’Reilly, “Malvern Hill”

May 11 - Brian Wills, “Inglorious Passages: Noncombat Deaths In The Civil War”

***From Around the Campfire...A Message from Our
President John Bamberl***



This has been a tragic unpredictable year. Who would have thought at this time last year we would all be going through this? I hope you and your families have weathered this strain and are doing well.

If not , we would like to hear from you. I have been on the board for 12 years and President for 8 years. I have come to know most of you and consider you family. Our Tuesday night meetings and social hours have become like family reunions to me and I miss you. I appreciate the members that have reciprocated my emails and are staying in contact. Your phone calls and emails are appreciated.

Our board has been more active than ever before. We have continuous email and regular Zoom meetings.

We are constantly talking about ways to stay in contact with our members. I am continually sending out emails on Constant Contact but they are only 55% opened. I am able to tell who opens them and I am resending the emails 4 days later to the ones who don't open. I am somewhat surprised by the lack of response.

Our Zoom lectures have been very well received and I appreciate your positive comments. If you are having problems getting on Zoom please call me. At this time they will continue until the library reopens. We are in constant contact with the library.

If you have better ways for us to stay in contact please notify me.

The membership renewals were sent out in early August. At this time, only 275 of the 438 members have renewed. I am sure the Pandemic is responsible for this and some may feel that because we are not meeting that we don't have expenses.

But we continue to amass expenses and your dues and contributions are needed and appreciated.

We have:

Zoom and Facebook expenses

Constant Contact contract

Secretarial expenses

Stamps

Envelopes

Office supplies

File expenses

Loss of book sales

Donations to Battlefield Preservation

Speaker expenses

Website expenses

Marketing expenses

Expenses for storing our Civil War books until the library reopens and we are able to hold our meetings once again.

And loss of new members.

May I close by restating our Mission Statement:

The Mission of the Scottsdale Civil War Roundtable is to educate the public about the American Civil War and to contribute to Civil War Battlefield Preservation and to assist in the retention of the Civil War memory.

Officers, Staff, and Meetings

OFFICERS/BOARD MEMBERS

PRESIDENT: Dr. John Bamberl 480-699-5844

VICE PRESIDENT: Mark Stoler

SECRETARY: Hal Bliss

PARLIAMENTARIAN: Hal Bliss

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ASSISTANT TREASURER: Richard Cox

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BOARD MEMBERS (thru 5/2022): Richard Cox, David Ward, Tom Merrill, Jo Roberts

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News Release: Chairman Shelley Dudley

Program: Mark Stoler, Gordon Dudley, George Bennet

Social Media: Chairman John Bamberl

Student Outreach: Chairman Tom Merrill

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MEETINGS

Zoom Meetings scheduled the 3rd Tuesday of the month at 6 PM by email invitation

September thru May

\$35 Annual Dues (individual)

\$45 Annual Dues (family)

EVERYONE WELCOME

www.scottsdalecwr.org

SCWRT #274

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Scottsdale AZ 85258-3749

e-mail: scottsdalecwr@gmail.com

Trivia Questions

1. Dr. John Hancock Douglas of the U.S. Sanitary Commission devised a remedy for scurvy during the war. What did Douglas recommend soldiers add to their diet to prevent the disease?
2. What significant connection did Douglas have with a noted Civil War figure?
3. Much has been written about the friendship between Ulysses S. Grant and James Longstreet at West Point and later years. Longstreet may have been best man at Grant's wedding (accounts differ) to Julia Dent Grant. What was the relationship between Longstreet and Julia Grant?
4. Having the reputation of being a martinet to his troops and fractious towards his superiors, Confederate Cavalry General William E. Jones acquired what humorous nickname?

Answers on page 14.

Scottsdale Civil War Round Table

Membership

Please Join Us!

Your membership enables SCWRT to help with battlefield preservation and attract the best Civil War experts from around the country as keynote speakers at our meetings, September thru May! Please fill out this form and return it with your check payable to Scottsdale Civil War Roundtable. Mail to this address:

Scottsdale Civil War Roundtable

#274 7349 N. Via Paseo Del Sur Ste 515 Scottsdale, AZ 85258-3749

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, & Zip _____

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Student Membership (no charge) _____

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Individual Membership \$35 \$ _____

Family Membership \$45 \$ _____

Additional contribution of \$ _____

100% of your contribution (minus expenses) goes to battlefield preservation.

TOTAL ENCLOSED \$ _____

*Our monthly newsletter "The Grapeshot" will be emailed to you.

Scottsdale Civil War Roundtable is approved by the IRS as a 501 c (3) non-profit organization. Contributions are tax deductible for federal and state income tax returns. Check with your tax consultant.

www.scottsdalecwrt.org

Scottsdale Civil War Roundtable

480/699-5844

Surviving Vicksburg (Article 95)

From March until May 1863, Union General Ulysses S. Grant had tried numerous tactics to dislodge the over 30,000 Confederate forces from the area around Vicksburg, Mississippi. The town above the strategic port on the Mississippi River was built high on a bluff and commanded a long view of the great river. From that vantage point, Confederate gunners determined which ships passed safely and which would come under intense fire. Since the river meandered in that area, and did not just run in a straight North-South line past Vicksburg, any vessel had to slowly navigate the bends which made the Confederate gunners very effective. If the Union could take Vicksburg, the flow of supplies to Confederate armies would be hampered and the entire Mississippi River from New Orleans to Illinois would be under Northern control. Despite General Grant's attacks from different angles, often coordinated with fire from Union Navy vessels on the Mississippi, nothing seemed to work! Every land assault had failed, and too many Union soldiers were wounded and dead, without any significant advantage gained. Although the Union forces had gradually compressed the Confederate lines inward to the city, there was no breakthrough. Over time, the Confederate soldiers consolidated into the small town itself and in defensive positions in the hilly terrain nearby. Grant knew there were at least 5,000 civilians in Vicksburg and gave an official warning that the town itself was now considered a target.

Dora Miller, a northerner by birth and a Union supporter, was married to a Southern lawyer and lived in Vicksburg. She kept a diary throughout the campaign and on March 20, 1863, wrote, "*In view of expected military operations against the city, non-combatants were being ordered by authorities to leave or prepare accordingly.*" Only a few chose to leave at that time, but many must have questioned their decision as the months wore on.

Emma Balfour, a Southern woman, married to a local physician, wrote, "*What is to become of all the living things in this place when the boats commence shelling--God only knows--shut up as in a trap--no ingress or egress--and thousands of women and children.*"

From May 18-23, General Grant ordered another series of attacks but all failed to reach the outskirts of the city, and the Union casualties were heavy. Many of those dead and wounded were still lying where they fell. It was unmercifully hot and both Union and Confederate soldiers were now affected by the stench of dead soldiers and horses and the screams of those wounded. On the afternoon of May 24, 1863, the Confederate commander offered a truce so that the Union could safely retrieve bodies and care for their wounded. At first, General Grant refused, perhaps thinking it might be perceived as weakness; but by evening he accepted the respite. On the 25th, both Union and Confederate soldiers emerged from their positions and gathered in the battle area. Despite the grim task at hand, some of the men carried on a light hearted banter and others traded personal goods such as paper and buttons. One contemporary wrote that, "*The air was filled with Yankee twang and Southern drawl.*" But after the field was clear, Grant decided that there would be no more direct assaults.

Historian Shelby Foote wrote that Grant "*did not regret having made the assaults; he only regretted that they had failed.*" Grant reluctantly settled into a siege and later wrote, "*I now determined upon a regular siege—to 'out-camp the enemy,' as it were, and to incur no more loss-*

But the White civilians, and the Black slaves who had no say in the matter, were now trapped in Vicksburg and would get no reprieve; and the shelling continued. With no new supplies permitted into the town, food, water, and medicine were rationed for the 30,000 Confederate troops and the 5,000 civilians. While the townspeople probably had enough supplies to last for months, if the only demand came from the civilians; the Confederate Army was never very well supplied and those soldiers now in Vicksburg became a further drain on the stored resources.

The residents and soldiers steadily went through the chickens and the few pigs and cows that were kept in the city; and then turned to other sources of meat. Dora Miller wrote, *"I think all the dogs and cats must be killed, or starved, we don't see any more pitiful animals prowling around."* The reality of the situation was even worse than she wrote, as most of those household pets did not starve or run off, they were consumed by their owners out of desperation. After some time, the Confederate Army also permitted the slaughter of a few mules which they no longer needed to pull supply wagons; but even that supply quickly dwindled. Mrs. Miller added later, *"I send five dollars to market each morning, and it buys a small piece of mule-meat. Rice and milk is my main food; I can't eat the mule-meat. We boil the rice and eat it cold with milk for supper."*

In his book, *The Siege of Vicksburg*, Richard Wheeler wrote about a sick little girl who was given a Blue Jay to care for by a Confederate soldier; but the girl was too sick to pay attention to the little bird. Later, the mother related that, without telling her child, the bird was used for soup.

Dora Miller wrote about the Southern soldiers, *"They are like hungry animals seeking something to devour. Poor fellows! My heart bleeds for them. They have nothing but spoiled, greasy bacon, and bread made of musty pea-flour, and but little of that."*

There was a looming fear of starvation!

But there was another eminent danger to the civilian and military occupants of Vicksburg. Union shells constantly rained down on the city. Dora Miller wrote, *"We are utterly cut off from the world, surrounded by a circle of fire. The fiery shower of shells goes on day and night. People do nothing but eat what they can get, sleep when they can and dodge the shells."*

Emma Balfour wrote later as the shelling reached the town, *"I was up in my room sewing and praying in my heart . . . and we went ...rushing into caves...Just as we got in, several (shells) exploded just over our heads. As all this rushed over me and the sense of suffocation from being underground, the certainty that there was no way of escape, that we were hemmed in, caged:--for one moment my heart seemed to stand still. Nearly all the families in town spent the night in their caves."*

Yes, she was writing about being in caves; not natural caves, but holes in the ground, recently dug out to provide some protection from the shelling.

Lida Lord described the futility of staying in a house. *"Before sunset a bombshell burst into the very center of the dining room ... crushing the well-spread table like an eggshell, and making a*

great yawning hole in the floor, into which disappeared supper, china, furniture... and our stock of butter and eggs."

Since their homes provided no safety from the shells, the residents began to build caves into the hills; hoping that they would be at least resistant to the bombs. And, in many cases, they proved to be!

Most caves were dug by slaves or hired workers. While some caves were paid for and built for a specific family, it was more common for several families to agree to share the new space, with the inherent loss of privacy that had to be expected. However, there were also caves built by speculators who would sell them, but more often they would rent space in a cave and those conditions could be more crowded. Most had some furniture, and the more elegant caves had carpet. Lida Lord wrote of one of the more extravagant caves her family shared with several others. *"The cave ran about twenty feet underground and communicated at right angles with a wing which opened on the front of the hill, giving us a free circulation of air. At the door was an arbor of branches, in which, on a pine table, we dined when shelling permitted. Near it were a dug-out fireplace and an open-air kitchen, with table, pans, ..."* She described one night when 65 people crowded in, including several slaves and other servants, as being, *"Packed in, black and white, like sardines in a box."*

But even the best caves could not withstand a direct hit. When one shell hit, Lida described the scene, *"...a landslide buried little Lucy McRae alive. Even as Dr. Lord, himself injured, was successfully digging thechild out of the dirt, a baby boy was being born in another part of the cave."*

While the residents withstood the constant shelling, eventually, the eminent starvation of civilians and troops led the Confederate commander request surrender terms from General Grant on July 3rd. On that same day, Dora Miller wrote that, *"...rats are hanging dressed in the market for sale with mule meat - there is nothing else."*

General Grant and General Pemberton, the Confederate commander, knew each other and their exchanges were cordial. Pemberton's superiors in Richmond wanted him to hold out longer, but with starvation becoming a reality, surrender of the troops and the town was necessary. Grant offered generous surrender terms and, on July 4th, Pemberton agreed. Over 30,000 Southern soldiers received paroles, conditioned on an agreement to not engage Union forces; and they marched out of Vicksburg. Grant's gesture was not just humanitarian; he knew he could not care for nor transport that many prisoners. Grant, in his memoirs, wrote that he hoped most would simply go back to their homes; however, to his disappointment, many re-joined other Confederate units and fought again.

The incessant bombing did cause civilian casualties in Vicksburg; but not as many as might have been expected from the thousands of shells of various types which were lobbed into the city. Twelve civilians were killed, including several children, and about 50 wounded badly enough to require care. It was, nonetheless, still a tragedy for the small town and its families.

But the fall of Vicksburg was a significant victory for the Union cause, and, personally, for General Grant. The Union, not the Southern forces, now controlled travel on the Mississippi River from New Orleans north into Northern states. However, it was a devastating loss for the Confederacy. A key lifeline for the South was lost and, in effect, the new nation was divided into states east or west of the River. Although the Civil War would continue for nearly two years, and many more Southern cities would be ravaged by Union forces; the take-over of Vicksburg was like a stake in the heart for the secessionist cause.

But the people of Vicksburg had endured. They had dug over 500 caves, subsisted on rations no person expects to have to eat, and withstood a horrific bombardment. The caves certainly helped preserve lives; but when the people emerged after the battles were over, their splendid Southern town was utterly destroyed. However, they would soon begin to rebuild Vicksburg; although now, of course, under the watchful eye of their new neighbors, the Yankees.

And the Southern citizens of Vicksburg would refuse to celebrate the 4th of July for another eighty years!

Contact the author at gadorris2@gmail.com

Trivia Answers

1. Answer: Since citrus fruit was hard to obtain, Douglas recommended sauerkraut and pickles, also good sources of Vitamin C.
2. Answer: As the foremost throat specialist on the East Coast, he diagnosed and treated U.S. Grant's throat cancer in 1884-1885.
3. Answer: They were 4th cousins (Longstreet's mother was a Dent.)
4. Answer: "Grumble" Jones.