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# The Camp Griffin Gazette

News and Information from the Green Mountain Civil War Round Table

Vol. XVII, No. 3 – March 2009

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<http://www.vermontcivilwar.org/gmcwrt/index.html>

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## “SHOOK OVER HELL”

### PTSD in the Civil War

Eric Dean

SATURDAY, MARCH 14, 2009

THE BLACK ANGUS STEAKHOUSE

ROUTE 4

QUECHEE, VERMONT

## Eric Dean

Eric Dean received his BA in History from Swarthmore College and his JD in Law from Indiana University. He interrupted his law career to earn a PH.D. in History from Yale University in 1996, and currently practices immigration law in Hamden, CT. He is the author of numerous articles and a book, SHOOK OVER HELL; POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS, VIETNAM, AND THE CIVIL WAR, published by Harvard University Press. This work investigates the psychological problems and readjustment of veterans of the Civil War.

12:00 - 12:30 Social Hour  
12:30 – 1:00 Buffet Luncheon  
1:00 Business Meeting  
1:15 Program, followed by discussion  
3:00 Adjournment

Guaranteed luncheon reservations MUST BE MADE by 7 p.m., March 12, 2009. **Cost per person for the buffet luncheon is \$15.00.** There is no assurance that additional meals will be available if you have not made a reservation. Should they be available, there will be an additional \$2.00 charge per meal. For the meeting and program only, there is a donation of \$2.00 for members and \$4.00 for non-members. For reservations please contact Gail Blake at 802-296-2919 or e-mail her at [auntis@comcast.net](mailto:auntis@comcast.net).

March Menu  
Assorted Sandwiches  
Soups – Salad - Dessert

## The Ellis Island Immigrant Cookbook

We still have some copies of The Ellis Island Immigrant Cookbook for sale at \$20 each. The book was written by Tom Bernardin, our NYC guide for this spring's CW Journey. The cookbook is a unique collection of heartwarming memories and recipes from our immigrant ancestors who passed through Ellis Island. *“This loving tribute to our immigrant ancestors will be of interest to historians and cooks and to all whose families came through this ‘golden door’.”* **ACADEMIC LIBRARY BOOK REVIEW**

Tom has made these books available to us at a reduced rate so that we can use them as a fundraising opportunity. So, support your Roundtable and purchase a unique gift at the same time! The books will be available at our Round Table meetings or can also be delivered by mail. Contact: Gail Blake at [auntis@comcast.net](mailto:auntis@comcast.net) or 802-296-2919.

The *Camp Griffin Gazette* is the monthly newsletter of the Green Mountain Civil War Round Table. Editor: Ginny Gage. We encourage and welcome all contributions and suggestions.

Send news and information to:  
Ginny Gage  
365 East Road  
Cornish, NH 03745 or  
E-mail: [lewandginny@emailmv.com](mailto:lewandginny@emailmv.com)

The deadline for the April 2009 newsletter is 30, 2009.

### Green Mountain Civil War Round Table March 2009— March 2010 Membership Rates

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail  
address \_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_ Single \$20.00 (includes newsletter)
- \_\_\_ Student \$10.00 (includes newsletter)
- \_\_\_ Two Person \$35.00 ( includes newsletter)
- \_\_\_ Family \$50.00 (includes newsletter)
- \_\_\_ Newsletter subscription alone – ten issues

\$10.00

Is this a new membership \_\_\_\_  
renewal \_\_\_\_

Dues are payable to: GMCWRT c/o Mary B. Davis, 54  
Renihan Meadows, Lebanon, NH 03766.

### TIME TO RENEW YOUR ROUND TABLE MEMBERSHIP

If you have not already done so, it is time to renew your membership for the year. Membership runs from March through February. When completing the membership form (included in this newsletter), please remember to include your email address. We have been striving to send as many newsletters as possible by email, as printing and mailing costs consume a large portion of our treasury. Also, email helps us to be able to get additional information that may come up between meetings to

you quickly. If you have any questions about whether or not your dues are paid, please call or email Mary Davis at [mary\\_davis01@comcast.net](mailto:mary_davis01@comcast.net) or 603-448-3472.

### 2009 Program Schedule Program Chair: Peter Sinclair

APRIL BEGINS OUR TUESDAY  
EVENING MEETINGS!!!

- April 14 Steve Gasiorowski of the 12<sup>th</sup> New Hampshire Serenade Band
- May 12 Dick Simpson - "Missouri 1861 and the Battle of Wilson's Creek"
- June 9 Craig L. Symonds, author of "Lincoln and His Admirals"

### Other Round Table Meetings and Happenings

**March 12 – Major McKinley Camp #9 – Sons of Union Veterans Meeting – 7 p.m. – Soldiers Memorial Building, North Park Street, Lebanon, NH.** Camp Members, Junior Members, SUVCW Auxiliary Members, and guests are welcome! For more information: [http://www.geocities.com/suvcwlebanonnh/classic\\_blue.html](http://www.geocities.com/suvcwlebanonnh/classic_blue.html)

**March 13 – CDCWRT** –Meeting to be held at the Guilderland Public Library. For more information, check out their web site: [www.cdcwrt.org](http://www.cdcwrt.org)

**March 19 – Joshua L. Chamberlain Civil War Round Table – Peter Dalton’s presentation on his book, “Hard Times, Hard Bread, Harder Coffee: The Civil War Correspondence of Hezekiah Long, 20<sup>th</sup> Maine.”** Meetings at the Curtis (Brunswick, ME) Memorial Library, 7 p.m. For more information contact Sue Bailey at [sebailey273@wmconnect.com](mailto:sebailey273@wmconnect.com)

**March 20 – NHCWRT – Paul Kenworthy – “Monuments in Brick & Stone: Civil War Forts of New England.”** Please check out their web site for more information: [www.cwrt-nh.org/](http://www.cwrt-nh.org/)

Sons of Union Veterans Ripley Camp would like to invite all men to any of their monthly meetings at the Rutland American Legion on Washington Street on the fourth Tuesday of each month at 7:00 P.M. They are also looking for speakers for their winter/spring programs and would love anyone with a program they’d like to present to contact Jim Proctor at [civilproctor@comcast.net](mailto:civilproctor@comcast.net)

Check out The Ripley Camp #4 web site at: [www.ripleycamp.netfirms.com/](http://www.ripleycamp.netfirms.com/)

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## Lincoln Bicentennial

To check out activities honoring the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of our 16<sup>th</sup> President, check out the website for the Bicentennial at: [www.abrahamlincoln200.org](http://www.abrahamlincoln200.org)  
Or: [www.lincolnbicentennial.gov](http://www.lincolnbicentennial.gov)

In Vermont, the state liaison for the Bicentennial is Dr. John M. McCardell, President Emeritus at Middlebury College, Painter House, Middlebury, VT 05753 – 802-443-5343 or e-mail at [mccardel@middlebury.edu](mailto:mccardel@middlebury.edu)

President Lincoln's Cottage, Upshur Street at Rock Creek Church Road, NW, Washington, District of Columbia 20011  
[www.presidentlincoln.org](http://www.presidentlincoln.org)

### MARK YOUR CALENDARS! Soldiers Memorial Building Lebanon, NH

Our newest Round Table member, Gary Ward, has invited us to a tour of the Soldiers Memorial Building on North Park Street, Lebanon, NH, on April 9, beginning at **6 p.m.** Some of you will remember we visited this building a number of years ago and had a wonderful tour of the Civil War artifacts stored there and the beautiful Civil War stained glass windows. These windows have recently been restored.

**If you are planning to attend, please contact us at: [lewandginny@emailmv.com](mailto:lewandginny@emailmv.com), by phone at 603-542-4664, or send us a note: Lew and Ginny Gage, 365 East Road, Cornish, NH 03745.**

Peter Sinclair is in hopes of having the artist who repaired the stained glass windows there as well.

This is an opportunity to visit one of the few G.A.R. buildings still in use as a meeting location for Civil War descendants.

### 2009 GMCWRT BATTLEFIELD JOURNEY

**April 30-May 4, 2009**

Join us this spring as we embark upon our annual CW related journey. We will be mixing things up a bit this year, adding a few historic sites from other eras to our itinerary. Our first stop will be Grant's Cottage near Saratoga Springs NY and then we will move on to visit FDR's Hyde Park, the USMA at West Point, Ellis Island, Grant's Tomb, many NYC Civil War related sites, and Watervliet Arsenal. The cost of our journey will be approximately \$600 per person, based on double occupancy, and will include RT motorcoach transportation from WRJct VT, 4 nights lodging at Homewood Suites by Hilton in Mahwah NJ, most meals, all

guide and admission fees, driver gratuity, information packet, and refreshments.

A \$75 deposit per person is required, deposit is 50% refundable if you cancel, 100% refundable if the trip is cancelled. Deadline for sign up is March 30<sup>th</sup>. Our complete itinerary will be available early in 2009, our guides are still working on the logistics and haven't divulged many details as yet.

The trip is open to all interested persons, you don't have to be a member to join us!

Deposits should be sent to Gail Blake, 55 Orizzonto Road, WRJct VT 05001, and checks made payable to the GMCWRT.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Gail at [auntis@comcast.net](mailto:auntis@comcast.net) or by phone at 802-296-2919

### "The Road To Disunion – Volume I: Secessionists At Bay (1776-1854)" By Willam W. Freehling (I 1990)

ISBN: 978-0-19-505814-7 / 978-0-19-507259-4  
640 pages including notes, bibliography and index

The author states (pg. 308):

"Civil War buffs who disagree on so much might agree on one proposition: they know less about the Gag Rule Controversy than about any other major slavery crisis."

After reading this book, this reviewer feels there is an awful lot about **all** pre-Civil War slavery crises that needs to be looked at again by any "Civil War buff."

To be clear: Freehling definitely has a Point to this book – slavery was the important cause for **all** major pre-Civil War issues and attempted resolutions, and the book attempts to illustrate this via discussions of each issue. These include:

- Missouri compromise
- Nullification
- Gag rule
- Texas
- Mexican War
- 1850 compromise
- Kansas-Nebraska act

The book can almost be viewed as a legal brief supporting the aforementioned Point – facts are woven into arguments supporting the notion that slavery concerns were key behind each crisis *and* its resolution/outcome. In addition, potential counterarguments are dismissed with countering facts and arguments. A secondary point of the author is to argue *against* the concept that there was always *a South* – there is a general belief that there was some Grand Southern Conspiracy from the get-go, and Freehling shows how this was not so. However, one does get the feeling that *a South* is starting to coalesce by the end of the book – I'm

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looking forward to reading the second book the author produced in 2007 (“Secessionists Triumphant (1854-1861)”).

In this volume, the author starts off with a general discussion of the varied make up of the different parts of the (southern) country – taking a trip along the Gulf coast states, then up the east coast, and then through upper south to the interior mid-west. This opening section is kind of strange – presenting what he believes are representative descriptions of standard life across the south, differentiating the views of say a fire-breathing South Carolina slave holding patrician from nouveau slave holder in Louisiana from old line Virginians &c. It gets a little bit complex understanding the nuanced differences at times, but the author gets his point across that at least *initially* through the period leading up to about 1850 there wasn’t a *South*, but rather a complex set of *different Souths*.

To complicate things even further, this initial discussion breaks the south up into distinct parts – lower, middle, upper souths – as well as older and newer souths. As lands opened up to the west (Georgia, Arkansas, Mississippi, ...) the newer slave holders tended to have different views perhaps than those exhibited by older regions (South Carolina, Virginia, ...). Similarly, there was a big difference between what Freehling calls “Black Belt Slave” areas (deeper south where slaves made up a significant percentage) as compared to the border states (Maryland, Kentucky, Missouri) where the percentages were much smaller – and tending to become even more so.

The next level of complication comes from the political party differences – the Democratic party was pretty much in existence throughout the period under discussion, but was constituted of at least 2, and perhaps 3 regional differences: north, south – and some times on the border. The Whig’s (and previous Federalist parties) also had those 3 regional differences too.

An interesting point to this reviewer was the gradual rise of the notion of the inherent *goodness* of slavery that grew in southerners as the years progressed. It would certainly seem that there was a large concept amongst slaveholders at the start of the 19<sup>th</sup> century that there was some problem with slavery, and that it would be best if it went away. The problem always being: How? Immediate abolition was out of the question – and certainly any *external* influences attempted by *outsiders* (non slaveholders) was viewed very negatively by southerners. The prevailing theory was to have gradual removal of slavery in a manner similar to what the northern states had done – set a date for freedom – then what would happen would be slave owners would (typically) *sell* their slaves into places further south. (To get their economic value before the “property” became free.) It must be noted that both south **and north**, (white) men had similar feelings about blacks: they did not want them around on an equal basis. For the north, that means freeing them *after* pushing large numbers of blacks south (into slavery), for the south the idea was that such migration would occur naturally over time. One could certainly see this happen as the northern states became “free” – and then watching the border states (Delaware, Maryland &

Kentucky for example) thinking about going through a similar process.

As this happened it caused a reaction from the Deep South: there was concern over two points: (1) They were getting hemmed in (hence the desire for more (slave) land acquisitions (Texas, Mexico, California, Kansas, ...)), and (2) The rise of *pro-slavery* argumentation – disbelief that northerners (including border states) would want to get rid of slavery.

In any event, the meat of the book has the author bringing the reader along on a journey understanding each of the aforementioned issues, describing how the final status was obtained after the politicking of the various regions fought and/or cooperated to achieve some desired end. The list of wonderfully interesting characters behind each region within each issue’s history is truly amazing – most of the names I, at least, had never heard of (thus illustrating very clearly the opening quote above).

The book is very well written, albeit the complexities of having to deal with various levels of “slave power”, “political party”, “geographic region”, can be quite daunting at times to keep straight in one’s head. If you’re interested in learning **why** slavery most certainly was the major cause for the Civil war, then this book certainly is a great place to start. Alternatively, if you’re looking for a broad-stroke history of this period of time, with plenty of colorful characters, then I’d also suggest this book as well. If you’re looking for detailed historical accounts of one or more of the particular issues, this is probably not the place to go: Freehling is more interested in the slavery angle as seen through the affects on the critical issues, rather than detailed analysis of each issue itself.

(Editor’s note: Thanks again to Alan Brunelle, NHCWRT, for sharing the above review he wrote.)

### **Round Table Member, Dave Bernard**

Thanks so much to all those who donated magazines to Dave at the February meeting. He was very pleased to receive them. Heavy books are difficult for him to handle. He also enjoyed the cards that were signed at the meeting. Dave is still at Elmwood Skilled Nursing and Rehabilitation, 290 Hanover Street, Claremont, NH 03743, Room 107B. He has a direct line: 603-542-4875, and keeps the phone right next to him! He would love to hear from folks or have them stop by.

### **Notes from our February Meeting**

We only had 19 for lunch, but had another seven attend for the meeting.

Peter Sinclair brought his brother from Australia and a nephew from New Jersey. Ed Lilley and Jean Andersen brought a friend from England along as well.

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Peter will be gone for our March and April meetings, and Dave Curtin will take his place.

Please see Page 3 regarding our invitation to visit the Soldiers Memorial building in Lebanon, NH. Dewey Jones is a member of the S.U.V.'s and indicated that they have pre Civil War artifacts there along with Civil War, WWII artifacts and some original furniture used by the veterans when the building served as a G.A.R. meeting hall.

We will have TWO meetings in April. The meeting on April 9 in Lebanon and our regular Round Table meeting on April 14.

Greg Cassidy asked "Was there a 5<sup>th</sup> Sergeant of companies during the Civil War?" Whitney Maxfield replied that there was one assigned to each unit, and that usually he was the assistant sergeant of the 2<sup>nd</sup> platoon and a line closer.

Our speaker, Paul Zeller, explained how he got interested in studying the Vermont troops many years ago by discovering a 2<sup>nd</sup> Vermont I.D. tag while metal detecting. Paul continued by talking about the soldiers in the 9<sup>th</sup> Vermont, how he researched them, ending his program by saying that if anyone wanted more information, they needed to purchase his book which he had copies of.

Peter made a DVD of our January speaker's (Tom Ledoux) presentation. He will give that to our Video Maven, Alan Cheever, to have in our collection.

Our raffle was won by Ed Lilley, Peter's nephew, Fred, Peter Sinclair, and Lew Gage who donated his pick to Gary Ward for the Major McKinley Camp #9 S.U.V.

### **Our Website is Back UP!!!**

With a **HUGE THANK YOU** to **Tom Ledoux** of the Vermont in the Civil War web site, we're back online again! This time things are a bit more basic. Some of the things Guy Destefano had on our previous web site such as links, Tom already has. Please check it out and if you have any corrections or would like to see something added, please let me know.

<http://www.vermontcivilwar.org/gmcwrt/index.html>

### **Tullius Cicero Tupper, Vermonter, Confederate**

**Contributed by Tom Ledoux**

Tullius Cicero Tupper was born 9 Feb 1809, in Barnard, Vermont, the son of Samuel and Mary (Green) Tupper. He graduated from the University of Vermont in 1832, and moved South soon thereafter. By 1835, he was living in Madison County, Mississippi, an attorney by trade. By 1840 he was also sawyer and planter, and represented his county in the State Legislature that year.

On 19 March 1842, he married Mary H. Drane, a native of Kansas. That year he also applied for an appointment to the U.S. Military Academy, but was not selected.

Tupper was quite successful in the planting business, accumulating 51 slaves by 1850, and 58 by 1860; the census for that year listed his wealth at \$85,000 in real estate, and \$115,000 in personal property.

In March 1862, he was commissioned brigadier general in the Mississippi Militia, and in June, promoted to major general. He resigned this position in March 1863.

By mid-1865, due to the ravages of the war and the military occupation of his property, he claimed his wealth had fallen to about \$20,000.

On 28 June 1865, he signed a loyalty oath, signed by the governor, and filed for a presidential pardon on 23 August, which was granted on 28 August. In his application, Tupper claimed to have been for the 1851 "Compromise Measure," but then voted with his state for succession. He also claimed he was "without previous consultation" assigned as an elector for the state and "was instructed by the people to cast the vote of the State for Jefferson Davis for President, and A. H. Stevens for Vice President of the then Confederate States," which he did.

Tupper died 14 August 1866 in Madison County, one of the more prominent Vermonters who sided with the rebels during the war. His final resting place is currently unknown.

(1850, 1860 Federal Censuses, Mississippi marriage records, UVM Catalogue for 1875, National Archives Amnesty papers, Mississippi Historical Society Papers, Civil War High Commands by Eicher and Eicher)

### **Students Curate Civil War Exhibition**

#### **Rauner Library, Dartmouth College**

Walt Whitman, poet and observer of the American Civil War, claimed in Specimen Days, "the real war will never get into the books."

Nicole LaBombard '09, David Schmidt '09, Professor Colleen Boggs, Virginia Deaton '09, and Special Collections Librarian Jay Satterfield (l-r) examine Civil War materials for an exhibition opening Feb. 3 in Rauner Library. Students in "The Civil War in Literature," taught by Associate Professor of English Colleen Boggs, stepped away from "the books" during fall term to explore primary sources from the era held in Rauner Special Collections Library. Starting Feb. 3, documents from "the real war" are on view in the library, in an exhibition curated by three of Boggs's students. "Memorial Poems: Civil War Literature in Context" runs through March.

Boggs's students each submitted an exhibition proposal as an assignment. The class chose three, from Virginia Deaton '09, Nicole LaBombard '09, and David Schmidt '09, to be displayed in Rauner. "Each display case is centered around

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a poem that the class studied, and puts it in context," says Boggs, "and each is going to raise a question for the viewer. "The poem 'The Empty Sleeve' imagines a wounded soldier coming home from the war," Boggs explains. "It piqued Deaton's interest in examining scenes of the homecoming and the war's aftermath."

The case designed by Deaton, an art history major, displays items including the 1865 diary of A.S. Wheeler, a native of Orford, N.H., and Memorial Poems: A Collection of Choice Gems of Poetry, Appropriate for Grand Army Gatherings. She also chose a copy of the Aug. 26, 1865, issue of Harper's Weekly and a letter from the Department of Treasury announcing the mourning protocol for President Lincoln. Dime novels were a popular form of fiction during the Civil War era. This post-war example centers on themes of cultural healing and unity.

"Nicole LaBombard became interested in the private dimensions of this great public event," recalls Boggs. LaBombard, an English major, filled her exhibition case with letters from soldiers' siblings. Letters "tend to be more informal and honest, especially from the younger sisters and brothers," LaBombard says. "I have a brother and sister myself, and these letters have a certain openness and innocence that I could relate to."

Schmidt, a history major and linguistics minor, looks at how the war affected Dartmouth. His case includes a letter from William Greene, a father concerned with his son's education, to Dartmouth President Asa Smith (Class of 1830), and a hand-written copy of the speech given by General William Tecumseh Sherman at Commencement in 1866.

Rauner staff welcome student involvement and encourage class projects, including exhibitions. "I love working with the students," says Jay Satterfield, Rauner special collections librarian. "They bring fresh perspectives to the collections."

Deaton, a self-described Civil War buff, adds, "Putting the exhibition together was a great way to end the class, and I feel so lucky to have this opportunity." Boggs will teach this course again in spring term 2010.

By NICOLE BAILEY

### **Hartford Historical Society**

Gail Blake received the following e-mail message from Mary Nadeau, Program Chairman for the Hartford, VT, Historical Society. If anyone knows of a possible speaker or would like to speak to their Historical Society, please contact Mary directly.

From: "Mary Nadeau" <[amnadeau@sover.net](mailto:amnadeau@sover.net)>  
To: [auntis@comcast.net](mailto:auntis@comcast.net)

Hi Gail,

David Mayhew gave me your name and e-mail address as someone I might contact in my quest for a speaker this fall at one of the Hartford Historical Society's programs.

Any time we have had a presentation about a Civil War topic, we have always had a good audience, especially when it concerned Vermonters

in the Civil War. Having recently found out that two of my great-grandfathers were participants, I am hoping to have a speaker for either September or November on a Civil War-related topic.

Unfortunately, our group has no money to pay a speaker. We would have to rely on somebody doing this for us as a labor of love. Can you point me in the direction of somebody (or yourself) who might consider sharing their knowledge with us for an evening?

We meet the second Wednesdays of Sept., Nov., April and June at 7 p.m. at the Greater Hartford United Church of Christ in Hartford Village (Route 14 - Maple St.). Our meetings are free and open to the public. I advertise them via the usual media - local newspapers, radio stations, posters, etc.

Thanks in advance for any suggestions you may have.

Mary Nadeau  
Program Chairman

### **MYSTERIOUS HISTORY OF A CIVIL WAR SABER By Ed Lilley and Greg Cassidy**

At the December meeting of the Green Mountain Civil War Round Table, several members exhibited fascinating items from their personal collections of Civil War artifacts and memorabilia. Edward Lilley brought in a cavalry saber and scabbard dated 1847, manufactured by the N. P. Ames Company, located in Cabotville (now Chicopee), Massachusetts. Based on identification criteria for American edged weapons, the weapon is an Ames 1840 Style Heavy Cavalry saber.

In 1935, the saber was discovered hidden within a dining room wall when Lilley's family home was torn down. Located in Whistler, Alabama, the home was built before the Civil War by Lilley's great grandmother and continuously occupied by his family until the house was demolished in 1935. Nailed within and concealed behind thick tongue and groove paneling, the saber was probably hidden by, or with the consent of, a deceased member of Lilley's family. But no one in the family alive in 1935 knew of its existence.

When removed from the wall, the saber was in excellent condition, well sharpened and coated with a preservative. Within minutes of its discovery in 1935, Lilley's family examined the scabbard in the sunlight. Remnants of a name were apparent, but the inscription residue was much too faint for identification. Assuming the saber was concealed after the end of the Civil War, nearly a hundred and fifty years have elapsed. And, over the last three quarters of a century between 1935 and 2009, many people tried but failed to decipher the name.

Following the saber's discovery, questions surrounded the weapon. Whose name is on the scabbard? Was he Confederate or Union? What was his cavalry unit? What

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was his war service? Did he survive the war? Who sealed the saber behind the wall? Why was it hidden and why in Whistler? Was the saber a battlefield souvenir? One of the last skirmishes of the Civil War took place in Whistler on April 13th, 1865. In that affair, Benton's Division, marched north from Mobile and collided with an estimated force of 500 Confederate Cavalry (12<sup>th</sup> Mississippi) in Whistler. The Confederates were engaged in the destruction of shop machinery, railroad engines and rolling stock at the Mobile and Ohio Rail Road repair shops. A brisk skirmish began around the shops and progressed northward as the Confederate cavalry withdrew. Less than a mile north of the shops, the Confederates established a skirmish line and set fire to a Mobile and Ohio railroad trestle over Eight Mile Creek. Although the action on April 13 was a skirmish, it has various names in regimental reports: Battle at Whistler, Battle at Eight Mile Creek or Battle at Whistler Station. Of interest to Green Mountain Round Table members, the Vermont 7<sup>th</sup> regiment played a leading role in that skirmish when they led a charge across the burning bridge, simultaneously extinguished the fire and drove off the Confederate Cavalry. For the Vermont 7<sup>th</sup>, Whistler was their final action in the Civil War.

The saber was an object of marked curiosity at the Round Table and Greg Cassidy was particularly interested in the challenge of identification. Lilley decided to try an experiment to identify the name on the scabbard, so on New Year's Day 2009, he set up a digital infrared camera system and photographed the inscription on the scabbard. The infrared image produced a dramatic increase in contrast and clearly revealed the name 'E. Laying' surrounded by a decorative cartouche. Lilley immediately sent an email to Cassidy, communicating the name and a copy of the infrared image.

When Cassidy first examined the Whistler saber at the December meeting, he was intrigued. He knew that the weapon was a Model 1840 saber, frequently used by Confederate Cavalry. Cassidy has been collecting and identifying Civil War artifacts for over forty years; he specializes in items that bear the owner's name or initials. Using Civil War databases, Cassidy enjoys the challenge and adventure of the hunt, trying to identify the individual soldier who carried a particular canteen, or medical kit, rifle, saber or cartridge box.

Until the advent of the Internet, Cassidy worked slowly; he had no alternative except to write to state archives in quest of critical information. Often he waited weeks or months for a reply. But now he searches rapidly, using digital sites such as 'The Civil War Soldier's and Sailor's Search,' a free site maintained by the National Park Service. He also uses the 'American Civil War Database,' a site that allows a search for a name when only a few letters of a name can be deciphered. To try to identify the owner of the Whistler saber, Cassidy actually began his search after the December meeting, using just the few readable letters evident on the scabbard. That search did not identify the owner. Roughly six million names are recorded in the databases. A search with only a few letters of a name often yields too many options, preventing an accurate identification.

Upon receiving Lilley's infrared image, Cassidy confidently renewed his search and he found several men in the archives named 'Laying'. But none listed had the requisite initial 'E'. Civil War records are based on the handwritten documents and they are often confused by misspellings. However, the search sites also suggest alternative spellings when they are known. In this instance, 'Layng' was offered as an alternative for 'Laying'. Cassidy ran yet another search, requesting identification of any soldier, Union or Confederate, with the name 'E. Layng.' The database revealed only one match: Sergeant Edward Layng, Company K, of the 1<sup>st</sup> Mississippi Cavalry. The 1<sup>st</sup> Mississippi Cavalry saw action throughout the Civil War, primarily in the Deep South and surrendered in Alabama.

After Lilley's infrared image revealed a legible name, it took Cassidy less than a day to identify Laying. Cassidy believes that Sgt. Laying's identification is exceptionally strong. Building on Cassidy's identification, Lilley contacted the Mississippi State Archives and requested a copy of Laying's service record.

Edward Layng's service record reveals that he was a resident of Pontotoc, Mississippi. He entered service early, June 2, 1861 only weeks after of the firing on Fort Sumter. Under the initial command of John H. Miller, formerly Captain of the Pontotoc Dragoons, the first Battalion of Mississippi cavalry (it was later named the 1<sup>st</sup> Mississippi Cavalry) was organized in the spring of 1861 at Union City, Tennessee. During the entire Civil War, the 1<sup>st</sup> Mississippi served in numerous engagements throughout the South. Layng was destined to serve until almost the end of the war, until he was captured at Selma, Alabama on April 2, 1865.

In the last few weeks of the war, the 1<sup>st</sup> Mississippi served under General Nathan B. Forrest whose forces attempted to block the advance of General James H. Wilson's thrusts deep into Alabama. Wilson's cavalry force numbered over ten thousand and each rider was armed with a Spencer repeating rifle. Mounted or on foot, Wilson's men could deliver an enormous volume of sustained, rapid fire and they were capable of near blitzkrieg advance. Outnumbered and facing overwhelming Union firepower, Forrest fell back toward Selma, Alabama. Fortifications protected Selma with a three-mile long, semi-circular barrier that terminated on the Alabama River, north and south of the city. The barrier was a raised earthen ridge, eight to twelve feet high, further protected by a deep ditch. Confederate artillery was positioned at strong points where fields of fire covered the approaches. Although badly outnumbered, Forrest manned Selma's defensive arc and braced for Wilson's assault.

Wilson's forces arrived in front of Selma's barrier on the afternoon of April 2. By 7 p.m. the Union troops broke through the Confederate defenses and surged into Selma. Conflict carried on after nightfall, marked by confusion of friend and foe, Within Selma, Wilson's men pursued and captured large numbers of men in gray. Total Confederate casualties were approximately 2700, roughly half their strength; Union losses were about 300.

During the nighttime chaos at Selma, Sgt. Layng was captured. In his service record, 'Edward Lang, Co. K, 1<sup>st</sup>

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Regt. Mississippi', appears on a 'Roll of Prisoners of War' that documents his capture at Selma on April 2, 1865. Unexpectedly, Layng's name also appears on a second "Roll of Prisoners of War", this one dated May 4, 1865; on this occasion his name is written Ed Laynge. The roll was taken at Citronelle, Alabama, only four weeks after Selma, where Lt. General Richard Taylor (the son of President Zachary Taylor) formally surrendered all Confederate forces that remained east of the Mississippi River.

Layng's listing as a prisoner of war at Selma and a later listing at Citronelle indicate that he returned to duty with the 1<sup>st</sup> Mississippi. After surrender in Selma he may have been paroled or escaped and, in either case, returned to the 1<sup>st</sup> Mississippi. Layng's rank through most of the war was 5<sup>th</sup> Sergeant. But at Citronelle he is listed as 3<sup>rd</sup> Sergeant, a promotion. The 1<sup>st</sup> Mississippi's ranks were thinned at Selma and promotions were likely. That Layng's name appears on two separate prisoner lists at Selma and Citronelle, and that the record shows a promotion in the interim, offer independent evidence that he returned to duty with the 1<sup>st</sup> Mississippi.

About six weeks after General Taylor's surrender at Citronelle, Sgt. Laying was paroled at Columbus, Mississippi. The Mississippi Index to Amnesty Oath Register records that Edward Laying took the Oath August 5, 1865.

**Green Mountain Civil War Round Table**  
**P.O. Box 1245**  
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Happily, the new technologies of digital infrared imaging and digital database searches have begun to solve the mystery of the saber found hidden in the wall of an Alabama home. Yet perplexing questions abound. When Sgt. Laying was first captured at Selma, was he relieved of his saber? Did Laying surrender his saber and lose it permanently, or did he manage to retain it or recover it later? After his capture at Selma, how did he return to the 1<sup>st</sup> Mississippi? Did Laying surrender his saber a second time at Citronelle? Who brought the saber to Whistler and a return to Southern ownership? Did Laying have any connection with the concealment in Whistler? If not, then who sealed it in the wall, how did he (or she) obtain it, from whom and what was the motivation? What did Laying do after the war? Where is he buried? Does an obituary exist? A century and a half later, answers to these questions may be difficult or impossible to establish. Nevertheless, encouraged by their unfolding research, Lilley and Cassidy pursue the life history of Sgt. Edward Laying and the strange journey of his saber.

Watch the Gazette for future developments!

**Sincere condolences to Art Stacy and his  
family on the recent loss of his mother.**

