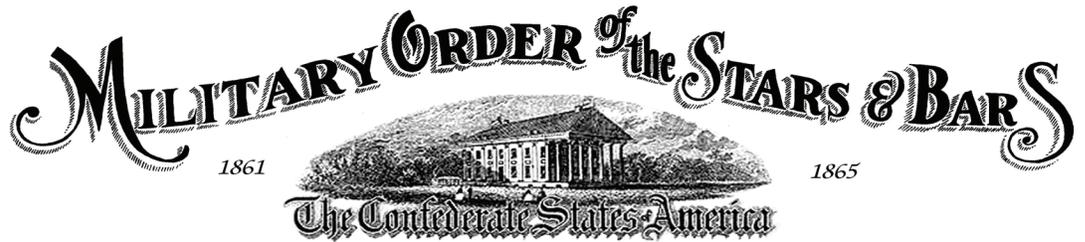




Volume 5, Number 1  
January 2013



## Officer's Call



### Sesquicentennial Series Article #28 **The Outlaw Jesse James**

*By David Whitaker, DCS*

Jesse Woodson James was born in Clay County, Missouri on September 5, 1847. He had an older brother, Frank, and a younger sister, Susan. His father was a farmer and a Baptist preacher from Kentucky who relocated to Missouri. He owned six slaves and 100 acres so was fairly well off financially. When Jesse was three years old his father went west to search for gold and to preach to those who cared to listen. He soon died there.

Missouri was a border state prior to the start of the war between the states. About 75% of the population identified with the South. Clay County was called "Little Dixie" because of its large slave population. In addition to slavery, the culture of Clay County was Southern. After the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act in 1854 Clay County was the scene of great turmoil because of the slavery question. This led to violence between pro-and anti-slavery militias, bringing an escalating cycle of atrocities by both sides. Guerrillas murdered civilian Unionist, executed prisoners and scalped the dead. Union forces enforced martial law with raids on homes, arrests of civilians, summary executions and banishment of Confederate sympathizers from the state. Jesse's family took the Confederate side and this shaped Jesse James' life.

Frank James, Jesse's older brother, became involved with a secessionist group and in 1863 was identified as a member of a guerrilla squad. A Union militia came to Jesses' family farm looking for Frank. Not finding Frank they lashed and beat young Jesse unconscious. When Jesse came to their home and everything of value had been burned. Frank James then hooked up with Bill Quantrill's Raiders and he probably took part in the notorious massacre of some 200 men and boys in the Lawrence, Kansas, raid. Frank followed Quantrill to Texas and on their return to Clay County; 16 year old Jesse James joined his brother.

The James brothers eventually joined the bushwacker group led by "Bloody Bill" Anderson and were involved in several massacres. Jesse was shot twice with life-threatening chest wounds and eventually separated from Frank who again joined Quantrill. Jesse formed his own gang that included Cole Younger and his brothers. Frank did eventually join his brother, Jesse.

(— Continued on Page 4 —)



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R. F. Lee

Gordon

Hood

Jackson



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The MOS&B *Officer's Call*, a leader among heritage magazines, is published monthly by the Military Order of the Stars and Bars.

The members of the MOS&B are descendants of the Confederate Officer Corps and elected government officials. We are dedicated to the preservation and education of the memory of our ancestors and the traditional values of our Southern Heritage.

Address all general business or advertising correspondence to MOS&B IHQ, P O Box 1700, White House, TN 37188-1700

## Commander General's Message

### *Robert E. Lee's Birthday*



General Robert E. Lee was born 206 years ago in Stratford, Virginia, on January 19, 1807. During the WBTS his birthday was celebrated in the South – a tradition which continues to the present day. This year my wife and I will join the celebration at the Southern Heritage Ball in Houston. Wherever you are this January 19<sup>th</sup> take a moment to reflect upon the General and consider the respect that he engenders.

On April 20, 1861, at the age of 54 Robert E. Lee penned the following words to his sister:

*With all my devotion to the Union and the feeling of loyalty and duty of an American citizen, I have not been able to make up my mind to raise my hand against my relatives, my children, my home. I have therefore resigned my commission in the Army, and save in defense of my native State, with the sincere hope that my poor services may never be needed, I hope I may never be called on to draw my sword.....*

The next four years saw his sword unsheathed in America's bloodiest war. He outlived the War by a little over five years, dying at the age of 63. Considering the legend that was born, he was writ large upon the canvas of history in a relatively short period of time. He did this not just by himself, but with a trusted cadre referred to by Historian Douglas Southall Freeman as **Lee's Lieutenants**.

The average age of men in the Order is 66; however, our numbers also include nearly 400 men that are younger than General Lee was in 1861. Sixty-four men joining our Order have done so based upon a stated degree of relationship to the General-in-Chief. Numerous others within the Order are also eligible to cite him as a blood relation, and when this heritage is extended to all of Lee's Lieutenants our numbers are legion.

There is a 17<sup>th</sup> Century English Proverb that states that "blood is thicker than water," which affirmed that relationships transcend religious affiliations. It can also have a broader interpretation when applied to our fraternity. We have the men whose heritage has prepared them to confront overwhelming odds. As an Order we are up to the challenge to ensure that the light does not dim on the service of Lee and his Lieutenants. The General showed that legends can be created by a few in a relatively short period of time.

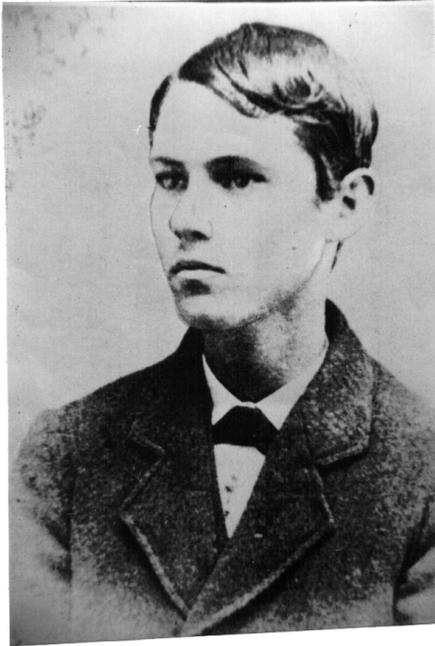
I conclude with another quote from Robert E. Lee:

*You can have anything you want - if you want it badly enough. You can be anything you want to be, have anything you desire, accomplish anything you set out to accomplish - if you will hold to that desire with singleness of purpose.*

We are the inheritors of the mantle that was passed from their time to our time. Now is our time!

Respectfully,

***Toni Turk***  
Commander General



(Continued from Page 1 - Sesquicentennial Article # 28)

After the war ended Jesse and his gang started robbing banks because of Jesse's hatred for banks for foreclosing on land owners who could not pay their mortgages during the war years. After getting a reputation as a bank robber, Jesse and his gang started robbing trains. This crime spree lasted for fifteen years and was over several states. The Pinkerton Detective Agency was called to help catch Jesse James and his gang of robbers and killers. Once during a raid on the family home a firebomb was tossed through a window and the explosion blew off the hand of Jesse's mother and led to the death of his half-brother. This event fueled Jesse's hatred against the Union and he vowed revenge and killed more often.

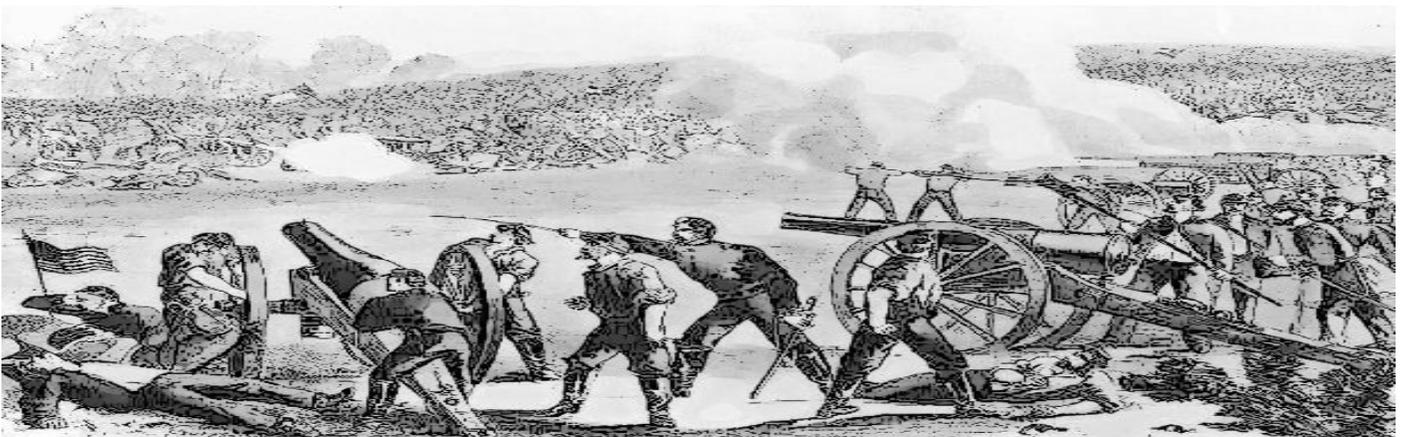
Jesse married his first cousin named after his mother, Zerelda, and called her Zee for short. They had two children Jesse and Mary. Rumors that he robbed the rich and gave to the poor like Robin Hood spread his fame and made him a popular outlaw.

The gang's record of successful robberies was broken by a defeat in Northfield, Minnesota in 1876. The citizens were armed to the teeth and when they realized the bank was being robbed they opened fire, killing, wounding or capturing all but Jesse and Frank, who managed to escape.

In 1881 Jesse moved his family to St. Joseph, Missouri, to hide out because Governor Tom Crittenden had placed a \$10,000 reward on his head, dead or alive. During the winter, Jesse, going by the last name of Howard, tried to buy a small farm in Nebraska but was short of cash. He recruited Bob and Charlie Ford to help him rob the Platte City bank. The Ford brothers posed as cousins of Jesse but were not related at all. On April 3, 1882, Jesse's family went about their daily business. Jesse reached up to straighten a plate hanging on the wall that said, "Bless This House." Bob Ford saw his chance and shot Jesse one time in the back of the head killing him. The Ford brothers attempted to collect the reward but were arrested for murder. They stood trial and were sentenced to hang but the Governor pardoned them.

Two years later Charles Ford committed suicide. And Bob Ford, *"the dirty little coward who shot Mr. Howard and laid poor Jesse in his grave,"* was himself killed in a bar room fight in Creede, Colorado, in 1892.

Years after his brother's death, Frank James turned himself into the authorities. He served prison time and lived a quiet life after his release.





## The Stone Mountain Confederate Memorial

### Children's Founders Roll Bronze Medal

For a \$1.00 donation, a medal was given and the child's name was recorded opposite the Confederate Veteran they chose to be memorialized. The funds raised were used for the largest Confederate Monument in the World.

## 12<sup>TH</sup> NATIONAL CONFEDERATE MEMORIAL DAY

STONE MOUNTAIN PARK @ THE CARVING

SATURDAY APRIL 13, 2013 @ 1 PM

Guest Speaker: Cassy Gray

Editor of The Stainless Banner

Honor Guard Men & Ladies needed !

Contact: Dennis Cook 706-247-5087 or Joe Bath 770-554-9377

Artillery needed Contact: Leonard Draper [leo369d@bellsouth.net](mailto:leo369d@bellsouth.net) OR at 404-401-5591 or 770-949-3014

Everyone interested met at Sky Lift parking lot 11am

FOR OTHER INFO CONTACT:

DAVID DENARD 706-678-7720 OR [denardodian@bellsouth.net](mailto:denardodian@bellsouth.net)

DAVID FLOYD 770-979-2637 OR [DLFreb@msn.com](mailto:DLFreb@msn.com)



## The Chaplain General's Thoughts

### *The Nobility of Who We Are*

Since our founding as the Order of the Stars and Bars in August of 1938 by the direct decedents of the Confederate Officer Corp, the greatest common challenge in each of our lives, in my opinion, has been the content and quality of our spiritual life, hence, our individual souls. I believe that we in the MOS&B are above average in this. This is an underlying reason that propels us to unite as fellow souls to honor our Confederate ancestors.

Although our ancestors lost their and our war for southern independence, the character of our forefathers continues to shine brightly in us, as evidenced in our giving honor to our Confederate officer ancestors. One of my favorite Bible verses which reflects our nobility of cause is Matthew 7: 13-14, "Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way is broad that leads to destruction, and there are many who enter through it. For the gate is small and the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it". In a well-known devotional by Oswald Chambers, named, All Noble Things Are Difficult, he writes;

*If we are going to live as disciples of Jesus, we have to remember that all noble things are difficult. The Christian life is gloriously difficult, but the difficulty of it does not make us faint and cave in, it rouses us up to overcome, do we so appreciate the marvelous salvation of Jesus Christ that we are our utmost for His highest?*

*God saves men by His sovereign grace through the Atonement of Jesus; He works in us to will and do of His good pleasure; but we have to work out that salvation in practical living. If once we start on the basis of His Redemption to do what He commands, we find that we can do it. If we fail, it is because we have not practiced. The crisis will reveal whether we have been practicing or not. If we obey the Spirit of God and practice in our physical life what God has put in us by His Spirit, then when the crisis comes, we shall find that our own nature as well as the grace of God will stand by us.*

*Thank God He does give us difficult things to do! His salvation is a glad thing, but it is also a heroic, holy thing. It tests us for all we are worth. Jesus is bringing many "sons" unto glory, and God will not shield us from the requirements of a son. God's grace turns out men and women with a strong family likeness to Jesus Christ, not milk sops. It takes tremendous amount of discipline to live the noble life of a disciple of Jesus in actual things. It is always necessary to make an effort to be noble.*

As the great apostle Paul writes in Romans 1:16 "For I am not ashamed of the Gospel", neither am I ashamed of who we are as descendants of the Confederate Officer Corp, but proud of who we are as Christian citizens of our beloved country. The key component of our ongoing lives and the best activity each one of us can do is to pray for each other, the MOS&B members, our families, and our country. Recently, I looked into the face of a dying 100 year old saint of the Lord, and asked her what the secret to her long life is? She answered, I prayed for others. Let us do likewise.

***Raymond Holder***

Chaplain General

## JOIN THE MOS&B Color Guard

**To join:** All members will need a Confederate Officer uniform to wear in the Color Guard. There will be no specific Officer uniform as members can wear any Officer uniform of their own choosing, including that of their own ancestor. All members shall also wear white dress gloves (they can be purchased at any formal wear store). I will have flags and flag carriers for members to use. I will also as Commander of the Color Guard train each member the Hardee's tactics that will be used. Together we will form the MOS&B Color Guard to provide historic presentation of the Confederate Officer Corps. Please contact Commander Ray Rooks to join by email at [mrgnaphill@aol.com](mailto:mrgnaphill@aol.com) or by phone at 410-258-2223. Forward with the Colors!

## BE SURE AND CHECK OUT THE MOS&B STORE WEB SITE

NEW ITEMS HAVE BEEN ADDED  
IN ADDITION TO THE GREAT BUYS ON  
EXISTING ITEMS.

*http://*  
*www.militaryorderofthestarsandbars.net/*  
*store/*

## Request for E-Mail and Mailing Changes

We need your correct E-mail address and mailing address. We are sending out the "Officer's Call" electronically; as well as, printed. Please make sure we have your current E-mail and physical address. Contact us at [headquarters@mosbihq.org](mailto:headquarters@mosbihq.org) so we may stay in touch.

## CALENDAR

Chapters, Societies and Departments can have their special events publicized on the new website calendar at: <http://www.militaryorderofthestarsandbars.org/>. Please submit the name of the event, its location, date, time, contact person, and any special instructions to the Adjutant General Bill Caynor at: [caynorwr1s@frii.com](mailto:caynorwr1s@frii.com).

## Sesquicentennial Highlight Article Notice

Any Society is welcome to submit a "Sesquicentennial Highlight Article" for publication consideration in the *Officers' Call*. Sesquicentennial Committee Chairman Ben Willingham asks that you coordinate thru him, as he is "orchestrating" these topics for the MOS&B newsletter. He can be contacted at [ben@willingham.com](mailto:ben@willingham.com).

## Submittal Entries

MOS&B Officer's Call Magazine welcomes submittals via e-mail to [editor@mosbfl.org](mailto:editor@mosbfl.org) or [swampeditor@yahoo.com](mailto:swampeditor@yahoo.com) on or before the 5th day of the month. Pictures are welcome. Please submit articles in Microsoft Word format or as plain text in your e-mail.

## Gatehouse Press online Civil War magazine

Gatehouse Press, publisher of Morningside books and *The Gettysburg Magazine*, now has a FREE Civil War magazine on the website. Every Monday and Thursday we post a new article. We also have a Photo of the Day every day. You can submit your own photos to be posted.

Articles cover all aspects of the Civil War and include: (1) First person accounts; (2) Civil War sites; (3) On This Day articles; (4) Interviews; and (5) more.

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We saved the historic house General James Longstreet used as his headquarters during the winter of 1863 – 64 from demolition and are developing it into a museum, (See [www.longstreetmuseum.com](http://www.longstreetmuseum.com)), and historic Bethesda Church which was used as a hospital by both armies, and battlefield preservation.

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60th Virginia Infantry Flag (WD 195)  
courtesy of the Museum of the Confederacy  
Richmond, Virginia

## Help Us Save This Flag

On August 3, 2012 permission was granted by the Museum of the Confederacy to seek donations to protect and preserve this valuable piece of American History. The 60th Virginia regimental flag has not been previously conserved or treated and was among the 282 unidentified regimental flags held by the U.S. War Department that were returned to The Museum of the Confederacy (MOC), per Joint Resolution No. 43 of June 29, 1906. It was delivered to the MOC on July 13, 1906. While the museum was located within the White House of the Confederacy, the flag was stored there. When the new museum facility opened in 1976, it was transferred into that building (where it resides today).

The condition is of such a concern that the conservator has recommended that this flag be advanced "at the top of the priority list to halt any further loss." There is much damage from battle and time, but this is a very viable piece for restoration. Much work needs to be done and soon.

The expense for restoration is \$16,500, but we believe that we cannot put a price tag on what this flag represents. Many men were

wounded or died beneath this flag, marching straight into the enemy. In our hearts they have all marched into immortality.

## History of the 60th Virginia Regiment

The 60th Virginia Infantry Regiment consisted of soldiers from **Mercer, Monroe, Greenbrier, Fayette, Roane, Botetourt, Alleghany, Braxton and Fauquier Counties**. The regiment was originally formed as the 3rd Regiment in Wise's Legion in mid 1861. On August 13, 1861 the Sixtieth Virginia Regiment was formed with ten companies of the Legion which were mainly from western counties.

The organization served under General Wise in his Western Virginia campaign until they were ordered to South Carolina with General Lee to guard the coastal region. While Marse Robert was in camp he took a liking to a Confederate grey horse ridden by Captain Joseph Broun, the quartermaster of the regiment. Lee would purchase this horse and name him Traveller. Traveller was Lee's faithful companion throughout the war and his life.

The sixtieth returned to Virginia to defend Richmond in the Seven Days battle of 1862. This hard-fighting regiment received 204 casualties while fighting at Mechanicsville, Gaines Mill and Frayser's Farm. At Frayser's Farm the unit charged and recaptured six napoleon cannons while brawling with the bayonet. Private Christian, of Co. I, was assailed by four Yankees. He shot one, bayoneted a second, when his brother Joseph, attracted by his cries of "Help! Help!" ran to his assistance and shot the third, and as the fourth wheeled and ran "Bob" pitched his musket at him and the bayonet entered between his shoulders protruding through his breastbone. He fell and begged piteously to have the weapon extracted, to which "Bob" replied that he was "too tired" just then, but would relieve him when rested. "Bob" was pretty well used up, bayoneted through both arms and a furrow plowed transversely across his breast. This altercation earned the sixtieth crossed bayonets on their regimental flag, ordered by General Lee.

The regiment served under Stonewall Jackson at Cedar Mountain and then Colonel McCausland, protecting the mountain passes of southwestern Virginia from the 1862 to early 1864. This assignment was essential for guarding the salt, niter mines and the rail lines supplying Richmond from the west.

Grant's 1864 three pronged assault induced heavy campaigning to drive the Yankee invader from their soil. At Cloyd's Mountain the sixtieth suffered 152 casualties and the deaths of their Lt. Colonel and Major. Piedmont shortly followed where their Ensign was killed and their Colonel (B.H. Jones) captured. They defended Lynchburg and then swarmed the union capital, fighting at Monocacy, Kernstown and then Winchester, where their flag was captured by Sgt. Henry Fox of the 5th Michigan Cavalry. Colonel Jones said this flag, "attracted the death-shot to half a dozen color-bearers". Private Thornton Kelly, part of the color guard, "had impaled several Yankees on its

spearhead,” before being wounded in the face by a saber cut and captured for his efforts. Thornton spent the remainder of the war in Point Lookout Prison. Jones exclaims, “What would I not give for that glorious battle-torn banner to transmit as an heir-loom?”

The regiment then fought at Fisher's Hill and Cedar Creek before relenting to the overwhelming numbers at Waynesboro on March 2, 1865, where the regiment of 154 men under Acting Colonel John L. Caynor were captured with much of General Early's Valley Army. The few men that escaped and the remaining men not present were disbanded at Christiansburg on April 12, 1865 after learning of Lee's surrender.

Statistically, 2,010 men served in the sixtieth over the course of four years, 506 were captured, 306 wounded, ten required amputations and fifty-three of the 306 died of their wounds. Three hundred thirty-three men of this regiment gave their lives as the ultimate sacrifice for the cause. Forty-eight of these died in prison and seventy-one were killed on the field of battle where this flag fluttered overhead. Essentially, more than half of this regiment were casualties at sometime during the war.

Contributions can be mailed directly to:

Museum of Confederacy  
 60th Virginia Flag Restoration  
 1201 E. Clay Street  
 Richmond, VA 23219

Please Make Your Checks  
 Payable to: *Museum of Confederacy*  
 A receipt for your donation will be mailed.

Please visit our website at:  
 60th Virginia Regiment  
[www.60thvirginiainfantryregiment.com](http://www.60thvirginiainfantryregiment.com) or Museum of Confederacy [www.moc.org](http://www.moc.org)

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## *Event Schedule*

### *76<sup>th</sup> General Convention*

#### *Military Order of Stars and Bars*

*May 28-June 1, 2013*

*Holiday Inn, Springdale, Arkansas*

#### **Tuesday, May 28**

5:00 P.M.-6:00 P.M.-Registration-Hallway outside Salon C.

#### **Wednesday, May 29**

9:00 A.M.-Bus leaves for Oak Hills (Wilson's Creek) National Military Park near Republic, Missouri. Lunch will be served.

6:00 P.M.-Bus arrives back at Holiday Inn in Springdale, Arkansas.

6:00 P.M.-7:00 P.M.-Registration-Hallway outside Salon C.

#### **Thursday, May 30**

12:00 P.M.-6:00 P.M.-Registration-Hallway outside Salon C.

1:00 P.M.-3:00 P.M.-General Executive Council Meeting-Salon C.

7:00 P.M.-9:00 P.M.-Commander General's Reception-Salon AB.

#### **Friday, May 31**

7:15 A.M.-8:45 A.M.-Forrest Cavalry Corps Breakfast-John Q. Hammons Room - separate registration

8:00 A.M.-9:00 A.M.-Registration-Hallway outside Salon C.

9:00 A.M.-12:00 Noon-Vendors Room-Springdale Room.

9:00 A.M.-9:30 A.M.-Welcome, Invocation, and Presentation of Colors-Salon E.

9:45 A.M.-11:30 A.M.-Business Session-Salon E.

11:45 A.M.-12:15-Department Meetings: ATM-Salon F/ AOT-Salon G/ ANV-Salon H.

12:30 P.M.-2:00 P.M.-MOSB Luncheon and Awards Presentation-Salon BC Speaker: Mark Christ, Director of Arkansas' Sesquicentennial Commission on the Battle of Prairie Grove.

3:00 P.M.-6:00 P.M.-Bus leaves for tour of Prairie Grove Battlefield State Park in front of hotel with bus waiting.

6:00 P.M.-8:00 P.M.-BBQ meal at Prairie Grove with a program on the battle, presented by the Prairie Grove State Park Rangers.

**Saturday, June 1**

8:00 A.M.-9:15 A. M.-MOSB Prayer Breakfast-John Q. Hammons Room-Speaker- Chaplain General Holder.

9:00 A.M.-12:00 Noon-Vendors Room-Springdale Room.

9:30 A.M.-Bus departs for the Confederate Cemetery in Fayetteville, Arkansas.

10:00 A.M.-11:30 A.M.-Confederate Cemetery Memorial Service jointly with the Southern Memorial Association, in Fayetteville, Arkansas for 140<sup>th</sup> year dedication. Cassy Gray is the speaker.

1:00 P.M.-3:00 P.M.-Closing Session.

4:00 P.M.-5:00 P.M.-MOSB GEC.

6:00 P.M.-7:00 P.M.-Social Hour-Rogers-Bentonville-Fayetteville Room.

7:00 P.M.-10:00 P.M.-Banquet-Rogers-Bentonville-Fayetteville Room. Speaker: Susie Young, Historian at the Shiloh Museum in Springdale, Arkansas on the WBTS in the Arkansas Ozarks.

Required Attire: Business Sessions and Commander General's Reception-Coat and Tie.

Banquet and Ball-Business or Period Attire.



*Picture of President Davis and Vice President Stephens from February 21, 1861 Harper's Weekly*

## **ALEXANDER H. STEPHENS**

### **201<sup>th</sup> BIRTHDAY**

### **CELEBRATION**

Come join us as we celebrate 201<sup>th</sup> birthday of our Vice President at Crawfordville, GA on **SATURDAY FEBRUARY 2, 2013**. The event will begin at **11:00 AM** at the group shelter near the ranger's office inside the Alexander H. Stephens Park. Follow the Flags and signs to the enclosed shelter.

BBQ Lunch will be served at NOON

(\$8.00 for adults/\$5.00 for children)

Our speaker this year will be John A. Stephens (Mr. A.H. Stephens nephew) portrayed by Mark Williams.

A very interesting story of his life and connection to Abraham Lincoln because of his Uncle.

*Immediately following the lunch*, there will be a Memorial Service at the Alexander Stephens gravesite by the **Old Guard of the Gate City Guard**, please join them. Please plan to visit Liberty Hall after the services.

For more information, please contact:

**Georgia Society MOS&B Commander David Denard @ 706 - 678- 7720**

# The Confederate Legacy Fund

It was a pleasure to honor Compatriot Michael Farr at our recent International Convention in San Antonio, Texas. He was awarded the Confederate Legacy Legion of Merit for his generous support for the Confederate Legacy Fund. Compatriot Farr is a member of the Col. James McCullough Chapter 242 in Greenville, South Carolina. He is one of nearly 50 members of the Order who have earned the distinctive title.

We are extremely grateful to all of the members of The Confederate Legacy Legion of Merit for their generous support. These Compatriots have chosen to support the Legacy Fund with donations of \$1000 or more. Last year, we received donations from our members in excess of \$17,000. In fact, our fund balance has grown to over \$50,000 since the inception of the program. But there is much more to be done.

The Confederate Legacy Fund is an important part of our over-all financial plan. Your gift to the Fund will remain intact for perpetuity. Only the interest from this fund will be spent. Expenditures from this fund are limited to scholarships and projects that will preserve and enhance our Southern Heritage. Currently these types of expenditures are paid for from our general fund. It is our hope that income generated from the Legacy Fund will eventually cover all of these costs.

MOS&B is a non-profit 501 (c) (3) corporation. As a result, all donations to the Legacy Fund are 100% tax deductible. In addition, consider that many corporations will match the charitable donations made by its employees. Another excellent strategy for charitable donations is by donating stocks. Under this strategy you can receive an income deduction for the full market value of a particular security. At the same time, you will avoid all capital gains tax on the transaction. There is no brokerage fee for this type of transaction.

Please consider MOS&B's Legacy Fund in your financial planning. Those members who make a one-time donation of \$1000 or more will receive the distinctive Confederate Legacy Legion of Merit neck ribbon and drop. A member may also qualify for the same award by making four annual payments of \$250, or two annual payments of \$500.

Your generosity is most appreciated. Membership in the Confederate Legacy Legion of Merit will assure adequate funding for scholarships and Southern Heritage projects. Please consider the Legacy Fund in your financial planning. *Deo Vindice.*

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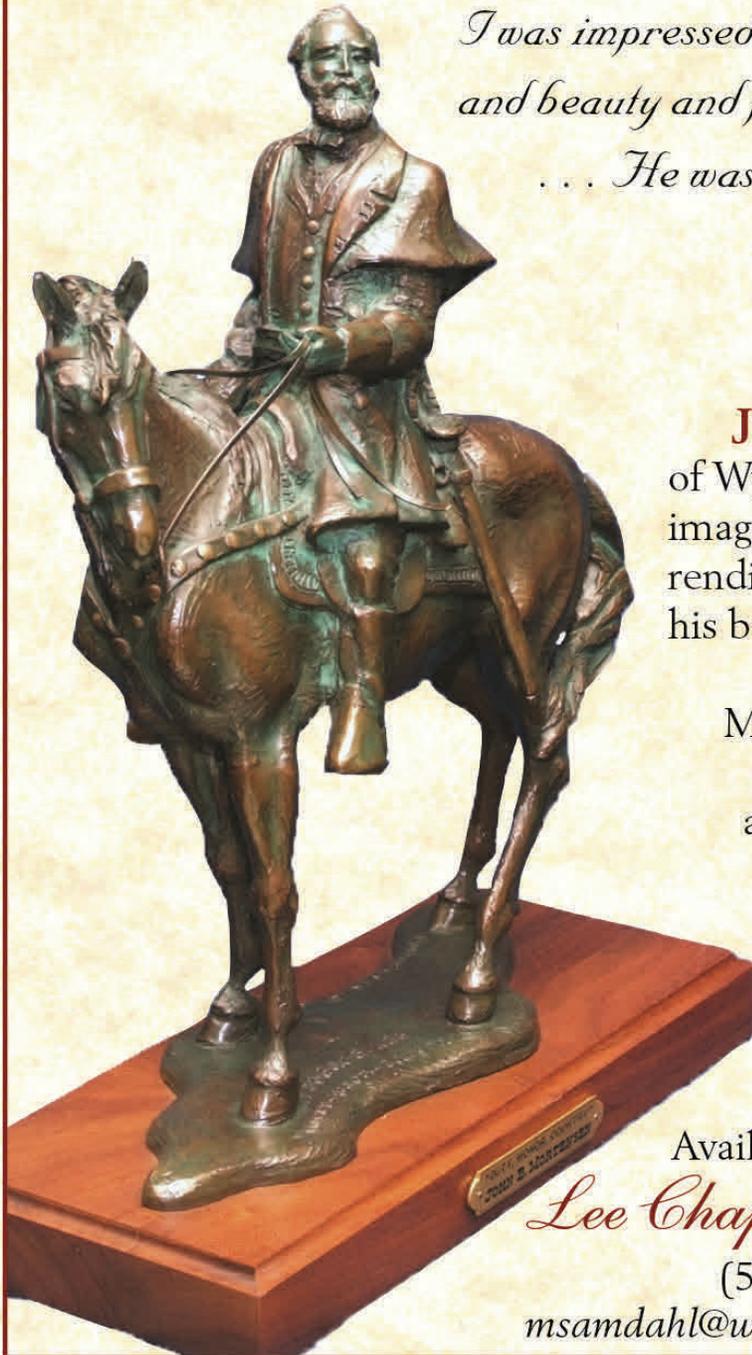
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## The Civil War Lives Through the Power of Film

By Greg Eanes

The American Civil War has left its mark and influence on American culture, especially when involving Virginia and Virginians. One of those influenced was late Crewe native Robert Buckner, a Warner Brothers writer, producer and director of movies during Hollywood's 'Golden Age' (1937-1948). He later worked for Universal Studios (1948-1951) and worked on teleplays thereafter.

Buckner was born in Crewe (Nottoway County) Virginia on May 28, 1906 where he had extensive family but was raised in North Carolina and Portsmouth, Va. Living in Portsmouth allowed him to visit relatives still living in the Crewe and Burkeville areas on multiple occasions. His Virginia upbringing influenced, to some degree, his work in Hollywood. While in Hollywood he wrote, produced and directed a number of patriotic motion pictures centered on historic figures or historic events including some that involved Virginia and Virginians in the Civil War.

Of particular note is *Santa Fe Trail* (Warner Brothers, 1940) starring Errol Flynn, Olivia DeHavilland and Ronald Reagan. Buckner wrote the script. The plot line covers the fictional experiences of West Point classmates J.E.B. ('Jeb') Stuart (Flynn) and George Armstrong Custer (Reagan) as they track down "Osawatomie" John Brown in 'bloody Kansas' in those violent days preceding Fort Sumter.

Buckner illustrates the point of view of the radical abolitionist through actor Van Heflin who portrays an idealistic yet mercenary follower of Brown and through the great Raymond Massey who gives an excellent, almost inspired performance as the half-crazed John Brown. Flynn does not defend slavery but counters the violent abolitionist point of view that the law must be obeyed and upheld and that "Virginia will solve her own problems in her own way." The movie climaxes with the capture and execution of Brown at Harper's Ferry.

Buckner creatively blended together characters that would later play important roles in the coming Civil War such as Secretary of War Jefferson Davis, West Point Commandant Robert E. Lee and West Point cadets Philip H. Sheridan, William T. Sherman, George Pickett and James Longstreet. It is not history, but it is a good movie.

This film was followed by *Virginia City* also starring Flynn and Staunton, Virginia native Randolph Scott and Savannah native Miriam Hopkins. Buckner later recalled Scott saying, "Both being from Virginia, we had much to talk about."

The plot concerned the Confederate government's urgent need for gold facilitated by Miriam Hopkins, a well connected Southerner acting as an intermediary for the Confederate resistance in the West. Confederate officer Scott is detached from his job as commander of Richmond's Libby Prison but not before Union prisoners Flynn, Alan Hale, Sr., and Guinn 'Big Boy' Williams manage to escape. As soon as the Flynn group reports back to Union headquarters they are assigned a special mission to uncover a suspected gold plot in Virginia City, Nevada. Blue and Gray meet in the West in a game of chess; Scott to get the gold to the Confederacy and Flynn trying to stop it. The movie ends with Flynn allied alongside Scott's group, defending the gold from bandits led by Humphrey Bogart. Scott is wounded and appeals to Flynn to hide the gold for the South; not to be used to fund the war but to be used to feed and clothe her people after what Scott knows is a certain defeat



SANTA FE TRAIL - from left, Olivia DeHavilland, Errol Flynn and Ronald Reagan.

Flynn carries out Scott's dying wish but is arrested by Federal authorities who accuse him of stealing the gold for himself. In the end, it takes a generous President Abraham Lincoln to intercede on Flynn's behalf. The gracious Lincoln had already received word of Appomattox and echoed Scott's desire to rebuild a defeated south and heal a wounded nation; "with malice towards none, and charity for all."

In 1956 his Civil War related screenplay entitled *Love Me Tender* was released with a new face – Elvis Presley. Presley played Clint

Reno, the brother of a Confederate veteran returning from the war. When the brother returns, he finds his former girlfriend has married Presley. Further, the brother's life is complicated when he robs a train of a Federal payroll. The raid is conducted while he's a Confederate soldier. The issues are the focus of the movie as those involved attempt resolution. The movie was originally titled *The Reno Brothers* but Presley's song 'Love Me Tender' (to the tune of the Civil War era *Aura Lee*) was released early and skyrocketed on the music charts (over one million singles). The studio changed the name of the movie to match the song and other songs were added to the script. Buckner recalled not wanting Presley to star in the movie.



VIRGINIA CITY - Savannah born Miriam Hopkins with Staunton, VA born Randolph Scott. Though born in Virginia, Scott was raised in North Carolina. His father, a textile manager, was from Franklin County, VA and his mother from Luray, Va.

In the early 1960s, Buckner wanted to get a studio to make a movie out of Douglas Southall Freeman's classic *Lee's Lieutenants*, but recalled that *The Red Badge of Courage* "was such a dismal flop at the box office that it discouraged them from another Civil War film."

While entertaining action, Mr. Buckner's films also reflect a Virginia upbringing that no doubt included boyhood visits to Appomattox, the battlefields around Richmond and Petersburg and perhaps even Sailor's Creek not to mention hours of listening to stories from aging veterans and survivors of the era. This Virginia upbringing continues to live through the power of film and will serve to entertain and evoke emotions from audiences for years to come. Buckner died in retirement in Guadalajara, Mexico in 1989 at the age of 83.

Source: *Southside Sentinel*, Colonel Thomas H. Williamson MOS&B Chapter # 249, Chase City, VA, Vol.1, January 2013, #4.