

"COURAGE, BULLETS AND BEANS"

. . . . a Panorama of the Civil War.

by Herschel C. Logan



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One hundred years have come and gone since the guns were silenced at the end of America's greatest tragedy. Not a soul is alive today who took part in that great struggle. Yet it seems only yesterday that as a lad in southern Kansas I was thrilled beyond words at the sight, and sound, of the old GAR Fife and Drum Corps as they marched proudly down the streets of my home town. The Civil War has long held a strange fascination for me. . . as it has for many others.

So. . . I am most humble, yet happy, that you have invited me to present a talk which I have given so many times during the past four years. To take recognition of those historic events . . . and to review together some of the highlights of those epochal years.

Bruce Catton, noted author and historian says . . . "The Civil War was America's greatest emotional experience. Somehow the truth about what we are and what we mean is bound up in the story of those four terrible years. The precise formulation of this truth may forever elude us, but the truth itself if there somewhere, expressed dimly, in the immense story of heroism and of meanness, of wisdom and folly, in a whole nation struggling with the enactment of its greatest tragedy.

"The Civil War was America's unique tragic experience. It is that tragic quality which justifies everything the Centennial is doing in its effort to bring to all Americans a fuller knowledge, and understanding, of that epoch . . . and we do learn from a study of great and moving tragedies.

"I think it is wrong to say that the Civil War divided this country. The war came because the country was already divided; and actually, in a strange and mystic way, the Civil War unites . . . unites us by the sharing of a great and unique experience. It has given to all of us, North and South together, a moving and incomprehensible memory. It remains always upon our conscience, just below the surface. It touches everything we do, it helps us to condition every emotional attitude we take. And it has led us as a people, I think, a greater distance along the road to that maturity of wisdom which is above all things necessary for a democracy." So wrote Bruce Catton.

When President Pierce signed his name to the Kansas-Nebraska Bill in 1854, he, unknowingly perhaps, set off a chain reaction which set aflame a seven-year orgy of bloodletting, the like of which few states can record. Violence flared on every hand as both free and slave forces battled it out. Guerillas sacked, burned and killed, as Kansas became a battleground of conflicting ideas.

The Dred Scott Decision, in 1857, only intensified the fight. This decision, you will recall, said that neither a slave, or the descendants of a slave could ever be citizens of the United States.

In 1858 there occurred a tragedy in Eastern Kansas that rocked the entire nation. . . the LeMarias du Cygne Massacre . . . immortalized by the poet Whittier in these lines. . .

"A blush as of roses
where roses never grew,
Great drops on the bunch grass
but not of the dew,
A taint in the sweet air
for wild bees to shun,
A stain that shall never
bleach out in the sun."

Into this turbulent period there emerged one of the most controversial figures of his time . . . a saint to some . . . an arch criminal to others. Of him the poet wrote . . . "He dared begin, He lost . . . But losing won." Such was John Brown of Osawatomie.

These words written a few hours before he was hung at 11:15, Dec. 2, 1859 for the Harpers Ferry Raid were to prove most prophetic. . .

"I, John Brown am now quite certain that the crimes of this guilty land will never be purged away, but with blood. I had, as I now think; vainly, flattered myself that without very much bloodshed it might be done."

On December 20, 1860, following the election of Abraham Lincoln, the state of South Carolina, by unanimous vote of their state convention, adopted a resolution, "to dissolve the Union between the state of South Carolina and other states united with her under the compact entitled, "The Constitution of the United States of America." Following her lead, came these states in order

Mississippi, January 9, 1861
Florida, January 10, 1861
Alabama, January 11, 1861
Georgia, January 19, 1861
Louisiana, January 26, 1861
Texas, February 1, 1861

In convention assembled in Montgomery, Alabama on February 4, 1861 Jefferson Davis, a former Secretary of War in the U. S. was elected president of the Confederate States of America.

On March 4, 1861 an humble man from Springfield, Illinois . . . and one destined in a few short years to be numbered among the great of the nations immortals of all time, took the oath of office as President, amidst the secession of Southern states over the slavery issue. . . an issue which had been debated pro and con all through the election campaign.

Taking notice of the secession by Southern states Lincoln had this to say in his inaugural speech. . . .

"In your hands, my dissatisfied fellow countrymen, and not in mine, is the momentous issue of the civil war. The government will not assail you. You can have no conflict without being yourself the aggressors. You have no oath in heaven to destroy the government, while I have the most solemn one to preserve, protect and defend it."

Slightly more than a month later. . . at 4:30 A.M. on Friday, April 12, 1861 Southern shore guns opened up on Fort Sumter guarding the entrance to Charleston harbor. Two days later the besieged garrison was forced to surrender, and the South chalked up their first victory . . . amidst rejoicing that the flag of the U. S. had been . . . "humbled before the little state of South Carolina" . . . so said the governor of the state.

If the attack on Fort Sumter did one thing . . . it electrified the nation. It unified the North . . . party lines vanished. The Stars and Stripes had been fired upon and a wave of War spirit swept the Nation. In the South military enthusiasm was equally rampant. Virginia, Arkansas, North Carolina and Tennessee, which had hesitated now joined the Confederacy.

The battle lines were drawn . . . call it what you will . . . Civil War . . . War between the States . . . War of the Rebellion . . . it was to herald the birth of four tragic years.

Next day the first of what was to be many calls went out for volunteers. . . 75,000 of them to, in the words of the call . . . "to suppress said combination and to cause the laws to be duly executed." The call was for three months and some 300,000 answered the call in the North. So confident was the South of victory that one soldier was heard to remark . . . "We can whip 'em with cornstalks." Later he commented, "but darn 'em they wouldn't fight that way."

Answering Lincoln's call was a former West Point graduate, but now a clerk in a leather and hardware store in Illinois. A grateful nation would later know him as General Ulysses S. Grant.

At Arlington, another graduate of West Point, and for three years its Superintendent, paced the floor of his home . . . his loyalty divided. In the end he tendered his resignation in the U. S. Army and accepted a command of troops from his native State of Virginia. He was later to head all the troops of the Confederacy. His name . . . General Robert E. Lee.

Thus a nation girded itself for war . . . even though a bit unevenly. . . for the population of the Southern states numbered only some 12-million as against the 23-million of the Northern states. It was a war in which the state of Kansas furnished more soldiers to the Union in proportion to her population than any other state. It was a War that cost more in American lives lost than in World War I, World War II and the Korean War combined.

Four long years which found brother against brother. . fathers against sons. . . loved ones in opposite camps. These will serve as an example . . .

U. S. Senator John J. Crittenden's son Thomas J. was a Maj. General in the Union Army. His son George B. was a Maj. General in the Confederate Army.

Gen. Philip Cooke fought against his own son, Gen. John R. Cooke at the Battle of Seven Pines.

Mrs. Abraham Lincoln had one full brother and three half brothers in the Confederate Army.

Rev. Robert J. Breckenridge had two sons in the Northern Armies and 2 sons in the Southern Armies.

Of Henry Clay's seven grandsons. . . 4 fought for the Confederacy and 3 fought for the Union.

Kentucky had 39 native sons as officers in the Confederacy and 31 native sons in the Union Armies as officers. Some 90,000 sons of Kentucky fought for the Union and 44,000 wore the Confederate gray.

It isn't necessary, or possible, to recount all of the 6,000 skirmishes, battles or campaigns fought . . or which side won or lost. Libraries are full of books on the subjects. Possibly more books have been devoted to various phases of the War than to any other period of history. But in the gigantic kaleidoscopic maelstrom of the conflict some names, facts and incidents rise above the din.

In giving the battles, casualties, and other events I have turned to the Official Hnadbooks issued by the U.S. Civil War Centennial Commission. Battle casualties include those killed, wonded or missing. Let us turn now to some important places . . events and battles of that long conflict

1861 . . . the first year of the War.

January 9 the ship, "Star of the West" bringing supplies and reinforcements to Fort Sumter was fired upon and driven out of Charleston harbor.

July 21 . . . On a hot Sunday morning near a stream known as Bull Run occurred the first major engagement of the Was as the Federal Army was put to rout. It was here that the famous Rebel Yell was heard for the first time. And, it was here that Gen. Thomas Jackson won the nickname of "Stonewall" Jackson.

It should be pointed out here that often the Yankees had a different name for a certain battle than did the Rebs. For instance . . . Two Yankee spies wormed their way into a Southern Camp. They were quite successful in fooling the Southern soldiers until sitting around the campfire one evening one of them boasted . . . "We sure gave them Yanks a bad time at Bull Run, didn't we?" In a flash he and companion found themselves looking down the muzzles of a dozen muskets. "Damn Yankees. . . you all should have known that we'uns of the South call that Manassas . . not Bull Run." Casualties of that first engagement totaled over 4800 for both sides.

August. . . and the war moved into the West. . . into Missouri at Wilson's Creek.

October 11 . . . the Confederate sea raider "Nashville" escaped to the high seas from Charleston harbor.

1862 . . . the second year of the War

February 16 . . . Fort Donelson on the banks of the Cumberland with its 12,000 defenders was captured by Grant and Foote.

March 9 . . . Early in the morning a Confederate ironclad steamed out to finish the previous day's work of destroying the Federal ships off Hampton Roads. But into her path there appeared a strange looking craft. . . "a cheesebox on a raft." History was made that day as the little ironclad "Monitor" fought the larger Confederate "Merrimac" to a standstill. No more would sea fighting be done with wooden vessels.

During the Shenandoah Valley Campaign Stonewall Jackson marched his force of 16,000 men over 600 miles in two months. They fought 5 major battles . . . defeated 4 separate armies totaling some 63,000 men.

March 7 . . . Battle of Pea Ridge, Arkansas

April 6-7 . . . saw one of the War's most costly engagements as the Confederates under Johnston and Beauregard engaged Grant at Shiloh. When the smoke of battle had lifted it disclosed some 23,000 casualties.

April 12 . . . On this day occurred one of the most bizarre and daring raids of the War when 21 Northern soldiers sneaked through Confederate territory and captured a locomotive. The race between the

"General" and "The Texas" is one of the most talked events of the War, even if the "General" was captured . . . and seven of the raiders hung.

April 24 . . . Farragut's Naval Squadron captured New Orleans.

June 26 . . . Opened the Seven Day's campaign around Richmond.

July 4 . . . Morgan and Forest, Confederates, began cavalry raids into Kentucky and Tennessee.

September 17 . . . will long be remembered as the bloodiest 12 hours in American history. The sun set that evening on 23,000 casualties of the battle of Antietam.

September 23 . . . Amidst all the fighting there came a message out of Washington in which the President declared that all slaves . . . over 3-million of them . . . in those states which had seceded were hereby declared to be free. The document was known as the Emancipation Proclamation.

December 13 . . . a cold freezing day which saw Gen. Burnside ordering six grand assaults against Lee's entrenched army at Fredericksburg. Ten thousand Union soldiers lost their lives or were wounded in that engagement. The Confederate loss was less than half that number.

1863 . . . and the War grinds on . . .

May 1 . . . The battle of Chancellorsville began . . . It was to be a victory for Stonewall Jackson . . . even though it was to cost him his life . . . accidentally shot by his own men.

June 9 . . . This day saw the greatest cavalry engagement ever fought on the western hemisphere as 20,000 cavalymen fought it out for more than 12 hours.

July 1-4 . . . They met at Gettysburg . . . and the blood of 23,000 blue clad soldiers mingled with that of as many boys in gray to make forever sacred the soil of Gettysburg.

July 4 . . . Vicksburg with its 31,600 defenders surrendered to Grant.

Grant had won 5 battles in 18 days, inflicted 5,200 casualties, captured 3-,600 prisoners, captured 31,600 prisoners, captured 172 cannons, captured 6,000 small arms, the greatest military haul ever made on the western hemisphere.

But all was not bitterness on the fighting fronts. After all these were Americans fighting Americans . . . and at times men from both sides would go out on the field of battle during a lull to give aid to some of the opposite side who had fallen in battle.

On August 10, 1862 a soldier in Blue and one in Gray lay wounded in a barn at Cedar Mountain. For a while they eased their pain with banter and light talk. Then quiet fell and presently the one who had lost a leg inquired calmly . . . "Why did you come down here fighting us?" Equally without emotion, but with much pride, the man in Blue whose arm was gone replied . . . "For the old Flag."

And . . . it is recorded that on many occasions . . . in the stillness of night . . . the men could be heard singing . . . often their voices would blend in such lines as these . . .

"We're tenting tonight on the old camp ground
Give us a song to cheer our weary hearts,
And of home . . . and friends we love so dear.

Many are the hearts that are weary tonight . . .
Wishing for the War to cease,
Many are the hearts looking for the right
To see the dawn of peace."

Or . . . maybe it was . . .

"I have seen Him in the watchfires of a hundred circling camps,
They have builded Him an altar in the evening dews and damp."

Or . . . perhaps it was Dixie . . . John Brown's Body . . . or maybe some old familiar hymn. But most popular of all was "Home Sweet Home."

Bitter as it was the War also had its humor . . .

When critics complained to Lincoln that Grant drank too much, the President smiled and replied with a twinkle in his eyes . . . "Well if that is what it takes to win battles . . . find out what brand he uses and I will have a barrel sent to every commander in the field."

The army coffee was described thus . . . "Black as the face of a plantation negro, strong enough to float an iron wedge and innocent of lacteal adulteration . . . it gave strength to the weary and heavy laden . . . and courage to the despondent and sick at heart.

And this little verse brought a chuckle to those who knew . . .

"Now I lay me down to sleep
The gray-backs o'er my body creep
If they should bite before I wake
I pray the Lord their jaws to break."

September 19 . . . Saw the beginning of the two day battle of Chickamauga which was to culminate in some 35,000 casualties.

November 19, 1863 . . .

On the Battlefield of Gettysburg where the blood of nearly 50,000 gallant soldiers of North and South had stained red the fertile soil a few months before . . . there stood a gaunt, humble and lonely man . . . worn and weary of the war and its tragedies. Yet what few words he spoke there would be cherished by unborn generations. Slowly, yet almost reverently came these phrases of that short speech . . .

"Forescore and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty . . .

Now we are engaged in a great civil war . . .

We are met on a great battlefield of that war . . .

We are met to dedicate a portion of it as the final resting place of those who have given their lives that this nation might live . . .

We are highly resolved that these dead shall not have died in vain . . .

. . . and that government of the people, by the people and for the people shall not perish from the earth."

In those dark and tragic days when the fortunes of war seemed to waver in the balance between North and South a great President had these words to say when asked how he stood the pressure . . .

"Many times I have been driven to my knees for Divine guidance with the realization that there was no one else to whom I could turn."

November 24 . . . Battle of Chattanooga, and Lookout Mountain, and their 14,000 casualties.

1864 . . . And, a War to the bitter end . . . as it picked up momentum

February 17 . . . First recorded sinking of a vessel by a manned submarine as the U.S. Housatonic was sunk by the CSA Hunley.

March 12 . . . Gen. Grant made Commander in Chief of all the Union Armies.

May 5 . . . Battles of the Wilderness . . . and a period of 29 days in which Grant lost 54,000 men.

May 8-12 . . . Spotsylvania . . . where Grant sent a dispatch saying . . . "I propose to fight it out along this line if it takes all summer."

June 3 . . . Cold Harbor . . . where 7,200 Union men fell in the first twenty minutes.

June 15-18 the seige of Petersburg which cost some 60,000 casualties

July 11 . . . and Washington panicked by Jubal Early's attack.

July 30 . . . The Battle of the Crater in which 4,000 Union soldiers and 3,000 Confederate soldiers were casualties . . . and all within the area of one solitary acre of ground.

Within an area of 20 square miles in Virginia was fought some of the bloodiest engagements of the War . . . as the tide wavered from North to South. Ten U. S. Generals met death here while the South suffered the loss of nine of its Generals. More men were killed here than were killed in the Revolutionary War, the War of 1812 and the Indian Wars combined.

July 28 - September 2 . . . The siege of Atlanta . . . and the beginning of Sherman's march to the Sea.

August 5 . . . It was on Mobile Bay that an exclamation symbolic of America's fighting spirit was sounded as Admiral Farragut shouted . . . "Damn the Torpedos, Capt. Drayton, go ahead!"

October 19 . . . And . . . Sheridan 20 miles away . . . Do you recall the famous rallying cry . . . "Turn boys, turn . . . we're going back!" And go back they did to turn a rout into victory at Cedar Creek.

And boys they were . . . over 200,000 soldiers in the Union Army were not over 16 years of age . . . over 2,000 not over 14 years of age . . . and 300 were not yet thirteen years old. A similar situation could also be said of the South.

The 26th North Carolina Regiment lost 85% of its men at Gettysburg . . . the greatest single loss to occur in a single battle of the war.

December 25 . . . The greatest Naval engagement of the War at Fort Fisher, N. C. Fifty-seven vessels carrying 670 guns made it the largest fleet ever assembled up to that time by the U.S. Navy.

1865 . . . the beginning of the end . . .

The people of the North in electing Lincoln by an overwhelming vote declared their intention of prosecuting the war on a larger scale than ever before.

The Union army had steadily increased in size until in May 1865 it numbered over a million men on its muster rolls.

It was different in the South . . . a bill was passed for the employment of slaves as soldiers. One regiment was to be armed only with pikes.

Like a prize fighter whose spirit is undaunted, but whose body is completely exhausted the once proud manhood of the Confederacy, which had dealt the Union Army so many crushing blows, held on in the face of overwhelming odds. There were no more white men to be forced into the ranks . . . no more arms and equipment. . . hardly enough food for the soldiers in the field. Both men and horses were showing the effects of the long hard winter.

Hunger, fatigue and desertions were the order of the day. War had lost its glamour . . . it was now a deadly serious business. Yet the Northern Armies were to feel the sting of the dying Southern Armies for a few more months.

Then came April. Hounded by relentless foes . . . Lee, like a hunted fox turned hither and thither until Sheridan placed his army squarely across his front. Lee ordered one last charge. His half starved troops . . . with a spark reminiscent of their old courage obeyed. But the Union Cavalry moving aside as though a giant curtain is drawn disclosed a vast army in battle array. The great War was about to end in one of its bloodiest tragedies. The Confederate advance was ordered stopped and Lee accepted Grant's order to surrender.

And . . . then came a terrible stillness at Appomattox. Two gallant leaders sat down across a table from each other . . . one the victor and one the vanquished. A cause had died, and yet in dying had passed a legacy to the victors which would unite both North and South into the greatest nation the world has ever seen . . . welded together by the blood of over 600,000 of its best sons.

Said one old veteran in gray . . . "You need three things to fight a right war, Sonny. You need yo'self courage, bullets and beans. Well we never ran shy on courage . . . we even had some bullets left at the end . . . but darn it all we run out of beans."

Proving that they could still smile at the end . . . this is Dixie's version of Appomattox. . .

The Confederates chased the Federals as far north as Gettysburg. They were very tired, and camped at Appomattox, preparing to wipe out the Yankees next morning. General Lee was mapping strategy when General Grant walked in, ready to surrender. Grant was so shabbily dressed that Lee mistook him for an orderly and handed him his sword to polish. The Union Commander thought Lee had surrendered, and thanked him. Lee being a true southern gentleman, didn't want to hurt his enemy's feelings and let it go at that.

Actually the truth is that the Confederates lost the war because they were simply worn out from whipping the Yankees.

The tumult and rejoicing was at its height . . . the War was over. The Stars and Stripes were raised once more over the ruins of Fort Sumter . . . just four years to a day from its surrender.

The date was April 14, 1865

It was evening at Ford's Theater. Suddenly a shot rang out. . . . a shot which was to stun and electrify the entire world. . . and leave in its echo the beloved Lincoln dying from an assassin's bullet. The poet tells of it in these words: . . .

“And when he fell in whirlwind
he went down,
As when a lordly cedar
green with boughs
Goes down with a great shout
upon the hills,
And leaves a lonesome place
against the sky.”

And his own words tell of his greatness . . .

“With malice toward none
With charity for all.”

In a little country cemetery in one of the border states between North and South is a small tombstone marking the final resting place of two brothers . . . one of which wore the blue . . . and the other who wore the gray. On the stone the sorrowing father had these words inscribed . . . “I don't know who . . . or which was right.”

As if to echo this sentiment there came from the pen of Francis Miles Finch these beautiful lines.

“By the flow of the inland river
Whence the fleets of iron have fled
Where the blades of the grave grass quiver
Asleep are the ranks of the dead.

These in the robings of glory
Those in the gloom of defeat
All with the battle blood gory
Into the dust of eternity meet - -
Under the sod and the dew
Waiting the judgement day
Under the laurel the Blue
Under the willow the Grey.

No more shall the war cry sever
Or the winding rivers be red
They banish our anger forever
Why they laurel the graves of our dead
Under the sod and the dew
Waiting the judgement day
Love and tears for the Blue
Tears and love for the Grey.

And in closing . . .

Rest on, embalmed and sainted dead!
Dear is the blood you gave;
No impious footsteps here shall tread
The herbage of your grave;
Nor shall your glory be forgotten
While Fame her record keeps,
Or Honor points the hallowed spot
Where Valor proudly sleeps.

MAY GOD PROTECT OUR NATION ALWAYS, INDIVISIBLE, AND WITH LIBERTY AND
JUSTICE FOR ALL.

This is my prayer I leave with you.