



# Battle Lines

Newsletter of the Atlanta Civil War Round Table  
Founded 1949

## February Meeting

*Reservations are required*

PLEASE MAKE YOUR DINNER RESERVATION IN THE AMOUNT OF **\$39** PER PERSON ONLINE AT

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Tim Whalen: P.O Box 2355

Griffin, GA: 30224

**TO REACH TIM NO LATER THAN THURSDAY BEFORE THE MEETING.**

**Date: Tuesday, February 11**

**Time:** Cocktails 5:30 p.m.

Dinner 6:45 p.m.

**Place:** Capital City Club-  
Downtown; 7 John  
Portman Blvd.

**Price:** **\$39** per person

### Program:

Peter Cozzens

*Hope and Humanity at Cahaba*

### Menu for February Meeting

Local Greens

Grilled Breast of Chicken

Gluten-free Chocolate Cake

## Hope, Humanity at Cahaba Prison

Conditions were harsh, food was scarce and Union prisoners had less space than their counterparts at Georgia's notorious Andersonville, yet most POWs at Cahaba, near present day Selma, Alabama, were in good shape at the end of the War. An enclosed warehouse, Cahaba operated from June of 1863. Intended for no more than 500, the prison population soared after 1864 and stood at over 3,000 by 1865. The humane leadership of Captain H. A. M. Henderson, a Methodist minister, the charity of Confederate neighbor Amanda Gardner, who among other things shared her library to keep prisoner's minds occupied, and the resourcefulness of inmates helped to promote an atmosphere of hope at Cahaba. For our next meeting, historian Peter Cozzens will explore Cahaba's mercies and offer explanations for the remarkable survival rates of its prisoners.

Peter is the award-winning author or editor of over 17 books on the American Civil War and the American West. Most recently his 2016 book *The Earth is Weeping: The Epic Story of the Indian Wars for the American West* won the Gilder Lehrman Prize for Military History. Retired from a thirty-year career as a Foreign Service Officer for the U. S. Department of State, Peter served for four years with the U.S. Army, rising to the rank of Captain before entering the Foreign Service in 1984. A native of Wheaton, Illinois, he is a graduate of Knox College.

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The Sultana (US Naval Institute)

## The Sultana Silence

It was April of 1865: General Robert E. Lee surrendered to General Grant at Appomattox on April 9; President Lincoln was assassinated April 15 and his murderer John Wilkes Booth was found and killed on April 26. While these stories clutched the psyche of a war weary nation, a compromised steamboat, the Sultana, started traveling up the Mississippi to take paroled POWs from the Confederate Prisons Cahaba and Andersonville home. A faulty boiler burst in the early hours of April 27. The resulting conflagration killed an estimated 1,800 men and many civilians also packed into the crowded boat. It was the deadliest maritime disaster of U.S. history. Still, outside of Memphis where victims were hospitalized and buried, few Americans of the time took notice.

## A Lost Infantryman's Gift from Cahaba

Waiting to return to Michigan after release from Cahaba, Sgt. Thomas Hinds wrote to his family: "I have alot of pumpkin seeds I got at Cahaba...They are large sweet pumpkins, the nicest I ever saw...We had nothing but them to eat for two or three weeks last fawl." Hinds, 27, died days later when the steamboat Sultana exploded near Memphis. His body was lost but his letter was delivered and cherished. For the 2018 reunion of the Sultana Descendants' Association, Hinds' relative Nancy Vietor shared his letter with the Old Cahawba Archaeological Park, which studies the deserted town of Cahawba and the vestigial remains of Cahaba prison. The letter became an inspiration for a gift to 100 who assembled for the Sultana reunion, said Site Director Linda Derry. Each family member received a packet of Alabama Pumpkin seed to take home. Hinds' family finally claimed his gift and the spirit of it became a memento for other Sultana descendants. Archaeologists and historians of Cahawba Park regularly welcome area families, prison descendants and visitors to the site. The park is open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily. There will be a Civil War Walking Tour on Saturday April 4 at the park: 9518 Cahaba Road/ Orrville, AL 36767. The tour starts at 10 a.m. Admission is \$8. For information see: [www.cahawba.com](http://www.cahawba.com) or call 334-872-8058

## In March: Tim Smith on Albert Sidney Johnston

General Albert Sidney Johnston was considered the leading light of the Confederate military early in the War. His death at Shiloh on April 6, 1862 "was the turning point of our fate," Confederate President Jefferson Davis later recalled. Author and historian Dr. Timothy B. Smith whose most recent book is *Shiloh: Conquer or Perish* will offer a program on General Johnston March 10. A former National Park Service ranger at Shiloh, Tim teaches history at the University of Tennessee at Martin. He is the author of several books, including *Corinth 1862: Siege, Battle, Occupation*.



### Civil War Love letters

For Valentine's weekend the Kennesaw State University Center for the Study of the Civil War Era will offer its third annual Director's Day program on "Love Letters of the Civil War," featuring speakers Dr. Tracy Revels and Dr. Brian Steel Wills. This touching program will be offered Saturday, February 15 from 9:30 a.m. to 11:20 a.m. in KSU Center/ Room 400/ 3333 Busbee Drive/ Kennesaw, GA 30144. Call 470-578-4771 or email Lauren Caya-Stewart [civilwarcenter@kennesaw.edu](mailto:civilwarcenter@kennesaw.edu) to RSVP. The program is free and open to the public. Donations however will be welcomed at the door.

### March Naval Symposium

Also at KSU, a Naval symposium will be offered March 7. Lecturer Mike Powell will present the program "Black Sailors in the Civil War U.S. Navy." Dr. Wills will present: "A Civil War Navy Adventurer: Hasker of the Virginia and the Hunley." Jeff Seymour from the National Civil War Naval Museum will also be present.

## The President's Corner

Our subject for discussion this month is one that has languished in the literature almost since the war ended – that of the Confederate prison camps, with the exception of Andersonville, near Americus, Georgia. In that camp, many Union prisoners died of hunger, disease and criminal activity within the prisoner ranks, especially in those last few months of 1864 and into 1865 before Union soldiers freed them. As it happens, many of the Union POW camps suffered almost the same mortality rates as Andersonville. However.....as we know, the victorious get first shot at writing the history books when a war ends. This story of the Cahaba Confederate POW camp near Selma, Alabama, is one you have likely never heard of – frankly, I had not. How a Confederate Officer and his cadre managed to keep the mortality rate at this prison to some 20% of that at Andersonville, and only some 25% of that in Union prisons is remarkable. Come listen to gifted story-teller Peter Cozzens bring this tale to life at our next dinner meeting, Tuesday, February 11.

See you there!

*John*

## Officers for the 2019-2020 Campaign Year

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