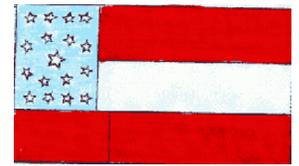




# The Vidette

## CALIFORNIA DIVISION

### Sons of Confederate Veterans



The J. P. Gillis Flag



Division Newsletter Issue 5. Published by Division Adjutant Vernon R. Padgett, 17 September 2002 [vp09@earthlink.net](mailto:vp09@earthlink.net)

## Marching Through Georgia II: The Battle of Atlanta, and Andersonville

By Jerry Dupree, Past Commander  
Camp 1742, Inland Empire

[Commander Dupree continues his narrative on Georgia travels --Ed.]

The fortifications around Atlanta were substantial and consisted of trenches dug in such a way that an attacking force had to advance the works by running down into a ditch, facing "palisades" of sharpened poles, and other fortifications. Cannons were placed in redoubts to cross fire support each other, and were formidable.

It is curious that the original map of Atlanta was a circle around a hill, as were the defenses. The city of Atlanta is still a circle formed by I-285 east and I-258 west around the city.

supply center for all the civilian population of the South. Atlanta had a prewar population of 7000. That swelled to 25,000 during the War.



Old Georgia Capitol at Milledgeville

At the time, Milledgeville was the state capital. Until the advent of rail transportation, water was the major supply route. Savannah and Charleston were important seaports for foreign trade. Atlanta is still the most important transportation hub in the state.

### The Hub of Georgia

If we went anywhere in Georgia, east, west, north, or South, we had to go through Atlanta. Georgia is a beautiful state, with a hilly terrain, very green with a variety of trees, and friendly, warm people. Southern hospitality is not a myth. We heard the very familiar "y'all come back now" phrase several times.

### Camp Sumter

We visited Andersonville, the site of the notorious Prisoner of War camp. It is a national cemetery and



The South Entrance to Andersonville

Atlanta was the transportation hub of the south to supply the Confederate Army, which required over 600 tons of supplies per day. Atlanta also was a

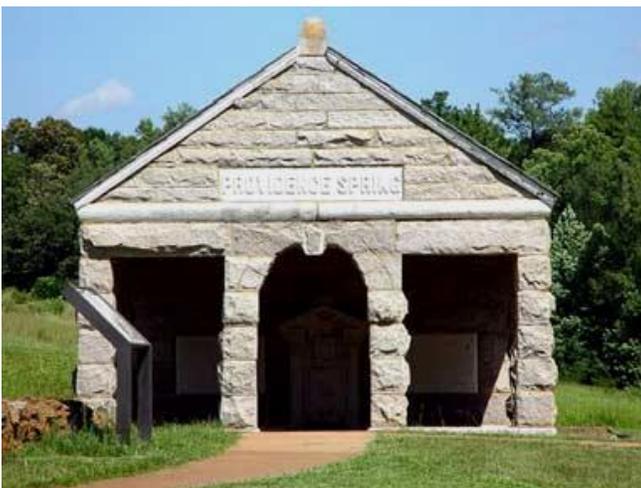
burials are still being done for veterans of our nation's conflicts. I found several revelations at Andersonville, which is actually the name of the adjacent town approximately two miles away. The actual name of the camp was "Camp Sumter."



**Andersonville Shebangs**

The site was chosen because of its remote location, and the creek running through it would supply water at one end and would carry away waste at the other. The center of the camp was a mire of swamp with the "sink," or latrine at the downstream end.

The upstream end could have been polluted by Confederate men and horses as was shown in the movie, "Andersonville." What I noticed were markers up the hillside showing at least five well sites dug by the inmates. In addition, a spring suddenly appeared at the high end beyond the "dead line," which still runs pure water.



**This spring at Andersonville still runs pure water.**

Henry Wirz was the commander of Andersonville and was the only Confederate to be tried and hanged as a war criminal. He was offered a pardon if he

implicated Jefferson Davis for the mistreatment of prisoners.

The stockade around the prison was made of vertical logs with "pigeon roost" guard towers every 100 feet, manned by older men or boys too young for military service. In addition, there were cannon positions with guns pointing outward to defend the camp, and inward in case of an uprising.

### **The Dead Line**

Inmates were shot if they crossed the "dead line" approximately 20 feet wide around the perimeter inside of the stockade. Nearly 3,000 men died of disease, starvation, and exposure, during the 14 months existence of the camp. The attrition rate of Confederates being held in Northern prisons was at the same level. It was Grant's decision to discontinue prisoner exchanges because the burden of maintaining the prisons was so huge to the Confederacy.



**Andersonville Dead Line**

### **Andersonville Raiders**

Some of the Andersonville prison inmates called themselves "raiders" and preyed upon the new arrivals called "fresh fish," and on the weak, defenseless, sick, and dying. When a new arrival was robbed of \$170 he reported it to Commander Wirz, who authorized the inmates to hold a trial and punish the bullies called raiders. Six of them were convicted and hanged. They are buried in a separate part of the cemetery. Wirz authorized a police group to be called "regulators" to prevent such acts from others.

### **A Change in Tactics**

When Johnston was relieved of command of the Army of Tennessee, and replaced by Gen. John Bell Hood, tactics changed from defense to attack. But the Confederates were vastly outnumbered and were in a strong defensive position.

Once the Yankees had cut the last rail supply line

to the city, there was no choice except to abandon Atlanta. The Confederates blew up any supplies



**Andersonville Cemetery**

useful to the Federals, and the fires spread to other industrial and commercial districts.

### **The Burning of Atlanta**

The Confederates left Atlanta in hopes that the Federals would follow, and so the South could reclaim territory that was lost in Tennessee. The campaign resulted in disaster. Sherman ordered all civilians out of the city and his forces ransacked the city, then, burned it to ashes.

We took some time to look for my family history in earlier Georgia.

### **The Double-Barreled Cannon**

We toured Oglethorpe County east of Athens, and while passing through, took plenty of pictures of the only double-barreled cannon in the world, designed by John Gilleland, a private in the Mitchell Thunderbolts, an elite Home Guard unit. It was conceived to have two cannon balls joined by a chain, so it would “mow down the enemy somewhat as a scythe cuts wheat.”



Cast in the Athens Foundry, the gun was never used in battle, and is on display at the courthouse in Athens.

I had always wanted to examine the Athens double-barreled cannon. I wondered why it had two cascables-- the round knob on the end of the tube. It is only used during casting and mounting on a carriage. I always wondered how its ignition worked, and whether it had one or two vents to insert friction primers.

It actually has three vents, one for each separate barrel and one in the center to ignite both barrels.

That would be tricky because the procedure is to ram a powder charge down the barrel and then pierce the bag to expose the powder to the primer.

How could the powder be rammed to a point midway between barrels? It would have to mean unscrewing the vent insert and pouring powder down from the top and then ramming the powder and projectile down the tubes. That looks to me to be the only way you can achieve near simultaneous ignition.



Even though the ignition is in the middle, if one ignited a nanosecond before the other, the result of two joined cannon balls would be catastrophic. One ball would exit the barrel slightly ahead of the other, thus wrapping back around. There is no way to ignite both barrels simultaneously with two primers.

I wonder why the idea of joining two balls with a chain and loading them both in a conventional cannon was ever thought of. Sailing ships did that to destroy sails and masts. Why not infantry? Why not cavalry? Sounds fiendish enough to me.

### **Family Records**

Through researching records at the Oglethorpe County courthouse, we found the records of my family and where my Georgia ancestors are buried.

We found the graves of my great great great great grandparents in a family cemetery on their plantation. County records show that he was a very active land dealer and exchanged many deeds covering pages of county records.

### **The Cotton Trail**

Historically, southern migration followed the “cotton trail” and my family was no exception. They originally arrived in North America in 1700 in Richmond. With each succeeding generation they migrated to South Carolina, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Texas, and Oklahoma. My fourth great grandfather fought in the Revolutionary War and was present at the British surrender at Yorktown, and wrote about it. He had a low opinion of George Washington. He died in 1848 in Oglethorpe County, Georgia.



### **Stone Mountain**

We visited Stone Mountain, the world’s largest sculpture depicting Jefferson Davis, Stonewall Jackson, and Robert E. Lee. Stone Mountain is a solid piece of granite 285 feet high and approximately a quarter mile diameter. It is a theme park much like Knott’s Berry Farm.

There are five similar monoliths in Georgia and there are many granite and marble quarries in the state. There are many buildings, schools, churches, and some houses made of marble, or granite. Marble is used for stepping stones, much like we Californians would use concrete. We also went to the Cyclorama. It depicts the Battle of Atlanta.

The Atlanta history museum is spectacular. It has an excellent Civil War department with many displays, including Gen. Patrick Cleburne’s sword, and General John B. Gordon’s uniform. They also have on display the Confederate flag that flew over Atlanta. It is huge: Some 30 by 40 feet.

We also took time to tour several antebellum homes and to photograph beautiful courthouses, churches, and homes. One area of Atlanta would rival Beverly Hills and is referred to as the “Buckhorn District.” There is also a small town by that name.

[ To be concluded. -- Ed.]

[All photos by Jerry Dupree; editing by Floyd Farrar.]

## **Improvements Made to California SCV Web Site**

Check [www.scvcalifornia.net](http://www.scvcalifornia.net) for the revised California SCV website. Gary Waltrip, Commander Camp 1440, The Stainless Banner, San Jose, continues to expand and add to the web site. We are fortunate to have him at the service of the California SCV Division. See Gary’s own site at [www.RebelGray.com](http://www.RebelGray.com). And thanks as well to Adjutant John Kindred, Camp 302 San Diego, for his past service getting our site up and running.

## **SCV Life Membership**

Many members choose Life Membership. Apply for Life Membership by completing the application, available on the SCV.org national website, and soon to be posted on our California Division site at [www.SCVCalifornia.net](http://www.SCVCalifornia.net).

Fee is \$300 if you are 59 or younger; \$200 for those aged 60 to 69, and \$100 for those aged 70 and older. Mail the check and form to HQ.

Life Members are assigned to Camp 2, and are also listed on local Camp rosters with “LM” instead of an expiration date. Division and Camp dues still need to be paid annually.

## **BLACK CONFEDERATES: THE FORGOTTEN MEN IN GRAY**

**At times, the Southern cause was stronger than any veneration to a master. Many servants felt necessary to stay with the army when their master had been killed or wounded-- even to return to the unit after taking their master home.**

**Some returned to fight along another family member of fallen master while others found new masters to serve. --Excerpt from the documentary.**

Little is known about the black men, women and children who fought for the Confederacy during those four turbulent years, 1861 to 1865.

This documentary discusses the loyalty of the free men of color and slaves who labored for the southern cause, Northern abolitionist Frederick Douglass who tried to convince Abraham Lincoln to use Black troops at the start of the war, Confederate President Jefferson Davis who knew the necessity of using blacks from the start, and the heart-warming story of the Chandler boys-- friends who fought during the war, one black, one white, yet both true Confederates.



SCV Member and Director Stan Armstrong (right)

Director Stan Armstrong researched his family history from the tales told by his parents of a white ancestor who was a Confederate Captain in a Louisiana Regiment and took his mulatto son into battle with him as a body servant. Hence, Armstrong's interest in the unsung heroes of the Civil War was born.

***Black Confederates: The Forgotten Men in Gray is out...Get your copy now! Did you see Producers Stan Armstrong and Jackie Powell at the [Antietam 140th Commemorative Reenactment](#) at Hagerstown, Maryland on September 13th through the 15<sup>th</sup>? They were selling copies of the documentary and signing posters of 'Black Confederates: The Forgotten Men in Gray' [www.desertrosefilms.7p.com/ConfederateBlacksVideo.html](http://www.desertrosefilms.7p.com/ConfederateBlacksVideo.html)***

For order information on *The Forgotten Battle of Fort Pillow* and *Black Confederates: Forgotten Men in Gray*, e-mail [desertrosefilms@www.hotmail.com](mailto:desertrosefilms@www.hotmail.com)

Watch the Desert Rose Production site for updates and changes at [www.desertrosefilms.7p.com](http://www.desertrosefilms.7p.com)

## SCV Logo Credit Card

Confederate flag logo, with soldier image, VISA. I have three applications left—contact me at [vp09@earthlink.net](mailto:vp09@earthlink.net) APR 12.65%. --Ed.

## Ken Burns's PBS *The Civil War* Available

The new 5-disk DVD set is coming out; list Price: \$129.98. At Best Buy \$99.99; Target \$79.99; Barnes and noble \$103; Amazon.com Price: \$97.49. -- Ken Koch, Commander, SCV Ventura County, CSS Virginia Camp 2062

WHEN YOU'RE THERE, STAND AND CHEER; SING 'THE BONNIE BLUE FLAG,' AND STAND FOR 'DIXIE' --

## More Reviews: Gods and Generals

Compatriots— Our last issue had several comments on the new film starring Robert Duvall as General Robert E. Lee. Here are two more enthusiastic reviews, forwarded by Heritage Officer of Camp 1208, Farrell Cooley – Ed.

Ron Maxwell, the director of "Gettysburg," is a convert who has learned the truth concerning the South and the war. This movie tells OUR story unlike ANY movie or TV special EVER!

EVERY true Southron MUST go see this movie on opening night. Take your friends and family. Take your Sunday school class. Encourage your children's teachers to see the movie; maybe even schedule a class trip to see it. It is groundbreaking, and it is true. This movie MUST succeed! If successful, no one will EVER attack the Confederate flag again-- it is that good!

This is THE movie that will fuel Southern independence, just as Braveheart has fueled passion for Scottish independence. When you're there, stand and cheer; sing 'the Bonnie Blue Flag', and stand for 'Dixie'. It will encourage others to do likewise. Folks, this is where we get off the stool of everlasting repentance.

The message from Ron Maxwell to my brother was simple: "Tell the faithful. Spread the word."

Following is a report from my brother, who recently saw the last test screen for *Gods and Generals*.

For a free, Christian South! -- John Salley, [jsalley82@yahoo.com](mailto:jsalley82@yahoo.com)



Still from *Gods and Generals*

## And Another Review

Compatriots, I recently observed a market screening of Ron Maxwell's new film, "Gods and Generals" in Charlotte, North Carolina. In my humble opinion, this is the most significant movie made about the South-- in my lifetime.

The movie's central character is Stonewall Jackson. The movie explores his deep, Christian faith, love for his wife, and his country. It stresses that we Southerners were fighting our Second War for Independence.

It contrasts the Southern Christian values with the Unitarian, philosophical values of the North. At one point, Yankee Colonel Chamberlain gives a soliloquy in which he justifies the Emancipation based on "might makes right, and the ends justify the means."

When the movie is released, I would encourage you to take your children, your classrooms, your friends, your Sunday school classes, and your neighbors to see this film.

This is the movie that I have waited a lifetime to watch. It tells our story.

For Southern Independence, Larry Salley  
[L8Pilot@aol.com](mailto:L8Pilot@aol.com)

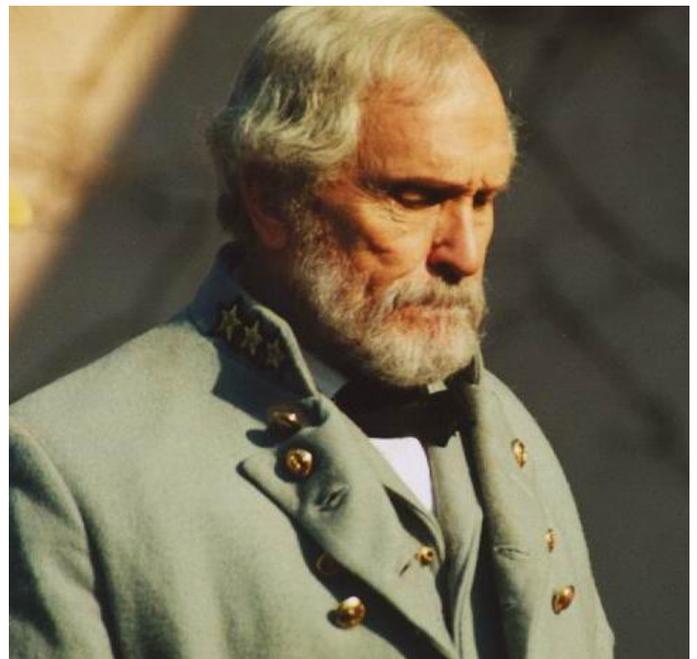
**"If we were wrong in our contest, then the Declaration of Independence of 1776 was a grave mistake and the revolution to which it led was a crime. If Washington was a patriot, Lee cannot have been a rebel."**

**--Wade Hampton**

## Compatriot Commanders, Adjutants, Heritage Officers:

It is entirely possible that the film *Gods and Generals* will create a national wave of interest in Confederate heritage much like the Ken Burns *Civil War* Series did 12 years ago—making Shelby Foote a (deservedly) rich man, and spawning an interest in reenacting that changed it forever.

Let us not be caught by surprise—get your affairs in order ahead of time—make sure all your recruiting plans-- and extra supplies-- are in place— Vern Padgett, Division Adjutant.



Still from *Gods and Generals*