

Fighting Joe Wheeler
Camp 1372

The Fighting **Joe Wheeler** Dispatch

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The Next Camp Meeting will be at 7:00 pm, Tuesday, October 14, 2008
at the New Merkel House

This Month: Hank Arnold will speak on the Battle of Corinth

There is another class of colored people who make a business of keeping the troubles, the wrongs, and the hardships of the Negro race before the public. Having learned that they are able to make a living out of their troubles, they have grown into the settled habit of advertising their wrongs -- partly because they want sympathy and partly because it pays. Some of these people do not want the Negro to lose his grievances, because they do not want to lose their jobs." **Booker T. Washington**

"We have allowed our constitutional republic to deteriorate into a virtually unchecked direct democracy. Today's political process is nothing more than a street fight between various groups seeking to vote themselves other people's money. Individual voters tend to support the candidate that promises them the most federal loot in whatever form, rather than the candidate who will uphold the rule of law." --**Rep. Ron Paul**

"... Democracies have ever been spectacles of turbulence and contention; have ever been found incompatible with personal security, or the rights of property; and have in general been as short in their lives, as they have been violent in their deaths." **James Madison**

"The government consists of a gang of men exactly like you and me. They have, taking one with another, no special talent for the business of government; they have only a talent for getting and holding office. Their principal device to that end is to search out groups who pant and pine for something they can't get and to promise to give it to them. Nine times out of ten that promise is worth nothing. The tenth time is made good by looting A to satisfy B. In other words, government is a broker in pillage, and every election is sort of an advance auction sale of stolen goods." **H. L. Mencken**

History records that the money changers have used every form of abuse, intrigue, deceit, and violent means possible to maintain their control over governments by controlling the money and its issuance. **James Madison**

**Sign up for the Wheeler Camp Message Board and receive
"The Dispatch" in it's entirety by e-mail.**

Contact Compatriot Mike Little at cdr_mike_little@bellsouth.net

Alabama: We Dare Defend Our Rights

"The principal for which we contended is bound to reassert itself, though it may be at another time and in another form."
Jefferson Davis, May 1865

Commander's Report

This month's Commanders Report is my response to a request for donations to the Ford's Theatre Society/The Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Campaign:

Ford's Theatre Society
P.O.Box 96058
Washington, D.C. 20090-6058

I recently received your request for donations and membership in the Ford's Theatre Society to help in commemorating Abraham Lincoln's Bicentennial Campaign.

I am always interested in preserving historical sites and especially those concerning the American Revolution or the War for Southern Independence. Preserving Ford's Theater is a most worthwhile and important endeavor and I would be happy to not only make a contribution, but to also assist in fund raising events.

Unfortunately, I take exception to the way revisionist history is being taught to our children and the way President Lincoln is being portrayed as being only slightly less than a Saint.

So, I must ask you to please explain how you will be portraying the following FACTS:

- Abraham Lincoln had tens of thousands of American citizens, including the grandson of Francis Scott Key, illegally imprisoned for the simple "crime" of disagreeing with his policies.
- He also illegally suspended the Writ of Habeas Corpus, which only Congress has authority to do.
- He ignored the First Amendment by closing numerous newspapers for printing articles disagreeing with his policies.
- He created, unconstitutionally, the first Federal Income Tax in the U.S. to finance the war.
- The Confederacy sent a delegation to Washington to try to avert a war but Lincoln refused to meet with them resulting in the deaths of over 600,000 men, women, and children and the maiming of thousands of others. Also, millions of dollars worth of public and private property was destroyed, burned, and stolen.
- Before the war Lincoln was asked what should be done with the slaves were they ever to be freed, he said, "send them to Liberia, to their own native land." He developed plans to send every last black person to Africa, Haiti, Central America - anywhere but the U.S.
- In a public letter to New York Tribune editor Horace Greeley in 1862, Lincoln explained that he wasn't particularly concerned with emancipation per se. "My paramount object in this struggle is to save the union, and is not either to save or destroy slavery. If I could save the union without freeing any slave I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing some and leaving others alone I would also do that. What I do about slavery, and the colored race, I do because I believe it helps to save the union."
- The original version of the 13th Amendment would have forever prohibited any Constitutional change that interfered with slavery in any state. Lincoln endorsed this amendment. It was passed by the U.S. House of Representatives with the required two thirds majority on February 28, 1861 and passed by the Senate on March 2, 1861 and then sent to the states for approval. It stated: "No amendment shall be made to the Constitution which will authorize or give to Congress the power to abolish or interfere, within any State, with the domestic institutions thereof, including that of persons held to labor or service by the laws of such State."
- How about the Morrill Tariff Act? It was written by Senator Justin Morrill (R - Vermont) and more than doubled the tax on the Southern Agricultural States and therefore devastated the economy.

I assume by now that you are no longer reading this letter and have placed it in the trash. If you have gotten this far then you have gained some level of respect and I respectfully request a response.

Sincerely,

Steve Johnson



The Rebel Yell

"The Pibroch of Southern Fealty"

by Monte Akers

One of the enduring legends of the War Between the States is that of the Rebel Yell. Various primary and secondary sources declare that the sound made by victorious Confederate soldiers was so singularly unique, so unforgettable, so commanding, that some federal units became demoralized and fled when they first heard it. Other, equally romantic accounts speak of Southern units competing to be the "best yelling regiment" in their brigade, or of becoming known as a "good yelling unit." Douglass Southall Freeman, biographer of Lee and author of Lee's Lieutenants once described it as "the pibroch of Southern fealty." A "pibroch" is a musical piece, usually for the bagpipe, usually martial. "Fealty" refers to absolute loyalty, as that of a vassal to a feudal lord.

The Yell was best known as being shouted by Confederates when they charged or were winning a fight, but it had other uses. It is said that units would often take up "the Yell" while they were on the march, passing it from unit to unit down the road. When anyone in the pre-Chancellorsville Second Corps heard it from afar, soldiers would supposedly declare "It's Jackson, or a rabbit." On one occasion during the Valley Campaign, while the Stonewall Brigade was in camp, one of its five regiments began yelling. Soon another regiment took it up, and then another, and another, until every member of the entire brigade was delivering the Yell at the top of his lungs. General Jackson came out of his tent, leaned on a fence, and listened. The cacophony continued for several moments and then began dying away. When the last echo had rebounded from the Blue Ridge, old Blue-Light, universally known to be totally tone deaf, turning toward his tent and said "That was the sweetest music I ever heard."

But what did that sweet music sound like? What was the exact pronunciation, accenting, spelling, and grammar of the Rebel Yell? Was it the "yee-haw" produced in various Civil War movies? Was it something else, something more? Was it a specific, definable, unique cry, or was it something more generic, magnified in effect and reputation by thousands of voices, the sweetness of victory, the embroidery of memory, and the veil of years?

Some attempts to describe it provide colorful description, but little clue about the actual sound, such as that by Confederate Colonel Keller Anderson of Kentucky's Orphan Brigade:

Then arose that do-or-die expression, that maniacal maelstrom of sound; that penetrating, rasping, shrieking, blood-curling noise that could be heard for miles and whose volume reached the heavens--such an expression as never yet came from the throats of sane men, but from men whom the seething blast of an imaginary hell would not check while the sound lasted. Equally vivid but vacuous were the words of a New Orleans *Times Picayune* reporter:

"It paragon's description, that yell! How it starts deep and ends high, how it rises into three increasing crescendos and breaks with a command of battle."

Somewhat more descriptive, but still unfulfilling, was the explanation given by historian Henry Steele Commager in *The Blue and the Gray*:

We hear a great deal about the Rebel Yell, though no two people seem agreed on just what it was, or even on its origin. It has been variously described as "more overpowering than the cannon's roar" and "a mingling of Indian whoop and wolf-howl."; it was probably born on the hunting field.

Specificity came from an unexpected source. In the mid-fifties, a humorist named H. Allen Smith went on a sort of literary Easter Egg hunt across the South, collecting different versions of the Yell from people--none veterans of the war--who were arguably in a position to know what it sounded like. The book, entitled *The Rebel Yell*, and published by Doubleday in 1955, was intended as whimsical satire, and it contains many anecdotes and witticisms whose ability to invoke mirth did not survive the decade. However, tucked among the cuteness are no less than nine candidates for being the Yell's exact pronunciation.

The first--"Eee-Yow!"--came from a 1952 *Time* magazine article. The next--"Keeook!"--was provided by a Northern scoutmaster whose only credentials were that his Panther patrol used the same cry on Boy Scout outings. Historian James Street authoritatively offered "Rrrrrr-yahhhhhhhh-yip-yip-yip-yip-yip" as the true Yell, although he was also heard to emit it as "Yeeeeeeeeeeow!" during a post-party argument with a Chapel Hill shoe merchant over the correct sound of the Yell. The merchant claimed the true sound was "Whoooooooooooooo-wow!" In Charleston, a lawyer considered an expert on the Yell, offered "Yuhhhh-woooooo-eeeeeee-UH!" Douglass Southall Freeman, who should have known if anyone did, delivered it as "Yeeeeeeeeee-ahhhhhhhhhh!" When Smith published a newspaper article on the subject, he was challenged by the *Twin City Sentinel*, which claimed "Eeeeeeee-YUH-haaaaeooooo." Finally, composer Richard Bales offered "Oooooo-eeeeeee!"

Mercifully, someone with better credentials and experience also offered an exact spelling and pronunciation of the Yell. Colonel Harvey Dew of the 9th Virginia Cavalry, who surely heard the sound repeatedly in his war days under J.E.B. Stuart. Carefully recorded it's intonation as it was given by his regiment during a charge at the Battle of Brandy Station. Writing in an April, 1892 article in *Century Illustrated Magazine*, he said:

In an instant every voice with one accord vigorously shouted the "Rebel yell," which was so often heard on the field of battle. "Woh-who-ey! who-ey! who-ey! Woh-who-ey! who-ey!" etc. (The best illustration of this "true yell" which can be given the reader is by spelling it as above, with directions to sound the first syllable "woh" short and low, and the second "who" with a very high and prolonged note deflecting upon the third syllable "ey.")

For those of you who want to try the Dew version of the Yell at home, note that "deflect" means "to bend or turn to one side, to swerve."

The Yell has probably been recorded many times; I am aware of only three. The first is least deserving of notice. It was done during the Civil War Centennial for an album of Southern music entitled "The Confederacy." The composer was Richard Bales, who was one of H. Allen Smith's demonstrators, and his "Oooo-eeey" is contained at the end of the last tract of the album as background for the concluding strains of Dixie. It can best be described as somebody's impression of a windy night.

A recording with better credentials came from the 75th Anniversary of the Battle of Gettysburg. During a newsreel filming of the obligatory handshake across the wall by veterans of both sides, six or eight Confederates took up the Yell. It was sort of a high-pitched "Wa-woo-woohoo, wa-woo woohoo." The newsreel is captured about 40 minutes into Volume II of the video "Echoes of the Blue and Gray." It has also been recorded on the Internet and was recently circulated among members of the Stonewall Brigade of reenactors. (*continued next page*)

A third recording, possibly a fourth, is in the possession of the United Daughters of the Confederacy and consists of a wax recording located in the UDC's national headquarters in Richmond, Virginia. The recording was either made just before the end of the 19th Century--at a Florida UDC Convention it was decided to "have the Rebel Yell preserved for posterity by means of a victrola record"--or during the 1930s. At the latter time, Hollywood approached the UDC about capturing the Yell for use in the movie "Operator 13." A magazine article reported that the UDC obtained such a recording from a veteran in Stuart's cavalry. However, the movie contains no Rebel Yell.

I first attempted to get the UDC to allow me to hear or copy their recording in the mid-1980s. In a series of phone calls, I was able to ascertain that the recording did exist, but I was never connected with, nor did I receive a call back from anyone with authority to either allow or deny permission for me to do so. Then in 1998 and 1999, a fellow Yell enthusiast and I connected by e-mail and made a two-pronged assault on the UDC, with the same result. The ladies acknowledge their possession of the recording, but indicated that they had no equipment to play the wax cylinder, and did not respond to any of our offers to secure such equipment in return for a chance to hear the recording. They do not seem anxious to share what they "preserved for posterity" with those of us who make up that posterity.

During the 125th anniversary reenactment of the Battle of Chickamauga, I served on the staff of Charles Clark, and distributed copies of the Harvey Dew article to the members of his brigade. After some discussion and coaching at dress parade, the brigade then attempted the Yell in battle. It sounded pretty good, and a few seconds of the brigade's impression was captured on the Classic Images video of the reenactment.

If one were to ask me what I believe the true sound of the Rebel Yell was, I would have to say that beyond the fact that it was high-pitched, or falsetto, that its spelling and phonetics were probably less important than the adrenaline that supported its emission. I think that different units and armies gave different versions of the Yell. Its origin has been attributed to Texans imitating an Indian war cry, to Virginians giving the fox hunt cry, and to backwoods coon hunters repeating their cry to the hounds. All of those attributions are probably correct. At the time the Yell became famous, its sponsors were simply yelling in an excited manner, the way all soldiers have yelled for time immemorial, and the yell they selected was surely the same one they used back home when they were excited. Why should they have given the exact same sound? J.E.B. Stuart's cavalry almost certainly sounded like Harvey Dew describes, and perhaps Lee's entire army did also, but what of the Army of Tennessee, and those in the Trans-Mississippi? They were yelling long before anyone from Virginia came out west to teach them how. As Douglass Southall Freeman told H. Allen Smith, "The rebel yell is pure legend. In Richmond it goes one way. In Atlanta you'll hear another. In Birmingham still another".

I believe, however, that I once came close to hearing the. or a, real, Rebel Yell. It was at the filming of the movie "Gettysburg." Troy Cool, sometime member of the Stonewall Brigade and the Southern Guard, was working full time for TNT and one day when we were portraying Confederates, someone asked Troy to demonstrate the Yell during a lull in the filming. After a few seconds of preparation, he did. It was the Harvey Dew version, but he went far beyond Dew's ability to describe and Clark's Chickamauga brigade's ability to imitate.

He reached down into his gut and uttered it as loudly and with as much desperate, penetrating force as the original Confederates must have produced after coming through a hailstorm of lead and seeing that they were winning the fight.

Finally, I offer a poem I wrote in the mid-1980s. It lacks the power Troy Cool gave the Yell, but says what I believe about it:

THE REBEL YELL

**None of us have ever heard it.
None of us ever will.
There's no one left who can give it.
Tho you may hear its echo still.**

**You may hear it up near Manassas,
and down around Gaines Mill.
In December it echoes in Fredricksburg,
in May around Chancellorsville.**

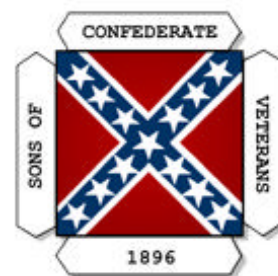
**It's the "pibroch of Southern fealty".
It's a Comanche brave's battle cry.
It's an English huntsman's call to the hounds.
It's a pig farmer's call to the sty.**

**It's a high-pitched trilling falsetto.
It's the yip of a dog in flight.
It's the scream of a wounded panther.
It's the shriek of the wind in the night.**

**It was yelled when the boys flushed a rabbit.
It was passed man to man in the ranks.
It was cheered when they saw their leaders.
It was screamed when they whipped the Yanks.**

**But none of us will ever hear it.
Tho some folks mimic it well.
No soul alive can truly describe
the sound of the Rebel Yell.**

-Monte Akers



"To you, Sons of Confederate Veterans, we submit the vindication of the Cause for which we fought: to your strength will be given the defense of the Confederate soldier's good name, the guardianship of his history, the emulation of his virtues, the perpetuation of those principles he loved and which made him glorious and which you also cherish. Remember, it is your duty to see that the true history of the South is presented to future generations."