



THE NORTHERN ILLINOIS CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

# THE drum roll

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In this time of staying at home and social distancing, I am sure many of you have found ways to fuel your Civil War interest through books and various social media platforms.

The Kenosha Civil War Museum has many programs and lectures in various formats.

The Civil War Round Table Congress has a good lecture series available through several social media platforms and also links to online courses.

[www.cwrtcongress.org](http://www.cwrtcongress.org)

STAY SAFE UNTIL WE ARE BACK TOGETHER

DUES RENEWAL FORMS ARE INCLUDED

## THE CRUISE OF CSS *SHENANDOAH*

By Pat McCormick

On April 9, 1865, Robert E. Lee surrendered to Ulysses S. Grant at Appomattox. Although this is often referred to as the end of the war, it was not; the last organized Confederate surrender was at the beginning of June. Even then, one belligerent - unaware of events on land - was still campaigning: the commerce raider CSS *Shenandoah*.

As with the most famous (and destructive) such raider, CSS *Alabama*, the *Shenandoah* was built in Liverpool, England. Unlike the *Alabama*, the newer ship had previously operated (as the *Sea King*) before her purchase by the Confederacy. On October 19, 1864, *Sea King* rendezvoused with her military hardware and an undersized crew in Madeira, receiving her Confederate designation. In military trim, *Shenandoah* carried 8 guns of various calibers. She had both steam and sail power, being fully rigged for the latter, and when at full sail on the high seas her propeller could be raised out of the water for greater speed.

At Madeira, Captain James Waddell took command, and set off on a remarkable journey. Confederate Navy Secretary Stephen Mallory had originally planned on sending *Shenandoah* to destroy the New England whaling fleet in the Atlantic, reasoning that this would hit the northeasterners in their pocketbooks and lead to a call for an end to the conflict. However, after deciding that this was too risky, he ordered Waddell to seek out the Pacific whaling fleet instead. Should the raider run into other victims on the way, so much the better.

Ten days later (October 29), *Shenandoah* secured her first prize, the Maine-based bark *Alina*; after taking her crew aboard, some of the prisoners volunteered to serve on the Rebel vessel. By November 13, the raider had scuttled, burned or bonded an additional 6 vessels, sending the accumulation of prisoners to Brazil aboard one of the bonded vessels. By now south of the equator, Waddell continued past the Cape of Good Hope, and was in the middle of the Indian Ocean by the New Year (claiming two more victims en route.)

On January 25, 1865, *Shenandoah* pulled into Melbourne, Australia, for repairs, rest and refitting. Her prisoners from her latest conquests were released (and were immediately deposited by the U.S. consul on site), she was put into drydock, and her crew was rotated ashore, while locals toured the raider whenever possible. While local British officials walked the

tightrope of international law, *Shenandoah* spent 23 days in the port, finally departing on February 18.

Sailing north, Waddell had a touch of good hunting near Ascension Island in the Carolines on April 1, burning four American merchant ships. Continuing on her journey, May 21 saw *Shenandoah* entering the Sea of Okhotsk, north of Japan and nestled beneath Russia. Six days later, she burned a solitary whaler. But although she remained in the seal until the second week of June, the raider encountered nothing more except fog and ice floes. Her next destination, however, would prove to be far different.

On June 16, the raider entered the Bering Sea. Making her way to the prime whaling grounds, she hit the jackpot. From June 22 to 25, *Shenandoah* took 6 prizes, then 6 more on the 26<sup>th</sup>, and an astounding 11 more whalers on June 28. The war had been officially over for several weeks by now, but the blissfully ignorant raider was decimating the U.S. Pacific whaling fleet. She finally departed the Bering Sea on July 5, passing up more potential victims in the Arctic Ocean due to concerns about the increasing fog and ice.

Apparently, Waddell considered the possibility of an attack on San Francisco (an event that some of that city's residents actively feared) but decided against it. Continuing south, *Shenandoah* was about halfway between California and the equator when she encountered the British merchant *Barracouta*, from which she learned the awful truth: the war had been over for a month-plus. Understandably concerned about encountering U.S. naval vessels and even more so about entering American ports, Waddell decided - after some discussion with his officers - to sail all the way back to Liverpool. And so they did, traveling around South America (including the storm-tossed Cape Horn passage) and anchoring in Liverpool on November 6, 1865.

In her career of just over a year, CSS *Shenandoah* had taken 37 prizes, with a total declared value of approximately \$1,38 million. She had also been the only Confederate ship to circumnavigate the globe. But she will always be remembered primarily for, albeit unknowingly, prosecuting the Civil War after it was over.



Wilson vs. Forrest  
By Dr. Laurence Schiller

The American Civil War has so many stories to tell. Did you know that the largest cavalry raid in the war began with a challenge by Federal Military Division of the Mississippi cavalry commander Major General James Harrison Wilson to Lt. General Nathan Bedford Forrest to come out and fight? It was Wilson's intent to invade Alabama with an independently operating cavalry army but to do so successfully, he was going to have to deal with the wily Forrest who had plenty of victories to his credit. As part of his intelligence gathering operation, Wilson sent one of his staff officers, West Point graduate and regular army Captain Lewis M. Hosea, to seek out, under a flag of truce, such information as he could gather directly from Forrest. Traveling with six specially picked troopers armed, as were all Wilson's men, with sabre, revolver, and Spencer repeating carbines, Hosea hoped to impress the rebels with Federal strength and firepower. Forrest's headquarters were in West Point, Mississippi and Hosea telegraphed him from Rienzi that he wished to meet to discuss prisoner exchange. Forrest agreed and invited the Federal horsemen to ride over to his headquarters. On the rainy night of February 23rd 1865 in a small country house lit only by tallow candles, Hosea and Forrest met. The Federal captain was suitably impressed and described Forrest as

*"a man fully six feet in height; rather waxen face; handsome; high, bull forehead, and with a profusion of light gray hair thrown back from the forehead and growing down rather to a point in the middle of the same. The lines of thought and care, in an upward curve, receding are distinctly marked and add much to the dignity of expression."*<sup>1</sup>

During the conversation Hosea proposed Wilson's invitation to fight. According to the Captain Forrest replied,

*"Jist tell General Wilson that I know the nicest little place down here..and whenever he is ready, I will fight with him with any number from one to ten thousand cavalry and abide the issue. Gin"raJ Wilson may pick his men, and I'll pick mine. He may take his sabers and I'll take my six shooters. I don't want nary saber in my command- haven't got one...I ain"t no graduate of West Point; never rubbed my back up agin any college, but Wilson may take his sabers and I'll use my six shooters and agree to whup the fight with any cavalry he can bring."*<sup>2</sup>

On March 22, after one of the rainiest winters in memory, Wilson and his cavalry army of 13,480 turned south to meet whatever Forrest could throw at them. Forrest was good, but the Confederacy did not have much left for him to use while Wilson's veterans had reached the height of their tactical powers within a combined arms force that sliced its way through Alabama. In the 1920's, Wilson's raid would become the inspiration behind the creation of American mechanized forces.

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<sup>1</sup> James Pickett Jones. Yankee Blitzkrieg: Wilson's Raid Through Alabama and Georgia. (Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Press, 2000), 24.

<sup>2</sup> Jones, Yankee Blitzkrieg, pp 24-5.



# **THE drum roll**

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"We are not enemies. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory will swell when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature."

Abraham Lincoln

## 2020-2021 SPEAKERS

Sept 4	Paula Zalar	Death and Mourning During the Civil War
Oct. 2	David Keller	Camp Douglas
Nov. 8	Laurie Schiller	David Stuart and the Burch divorce trial of 1861
Dec. 4	Tim Smith	Grierson's Raid
Jan. 8	Doug Dammann	1 <sup>st</sup> Wisconsin
Feb. 5	Mike Powell	African Americans in the U.S. Navy
Mar. 5	Bruce Allardice	TBD
Apr. 2	Pamela Toler	Nursing in the Civil War
May 7	Eric Wittenberg	Tullahoma or Chickamauga
June 4	Curt Fields	Portrayal of General Grant

