

# Olustee Observer

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE OLUSTEE BATTLEFIELD HISTORIC STATE PARK  
CITIZEN SUPPORT ORGANIZATION

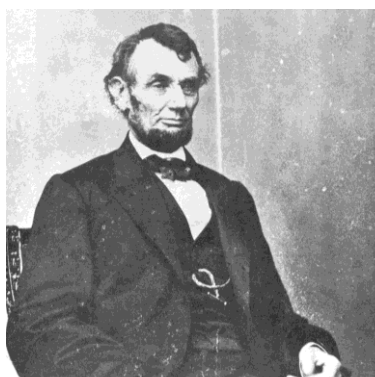
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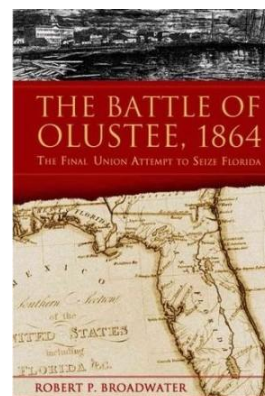
FALL 2016 EDITION

November 20, 2016

## Civil War Author Robert P. Broadwater, Speaks with Olustee Observer



Robert P. Broadwater has been an enormously prolific author of Civil War works in recent years. Among the most noted are *The Battle of Perryville, 1862*, *Culmination of the Failed Kentucky Campaign* from 2005 and *Chickamauga, Andersonville, Fort Sumter and Guard Duty at Home: Four Civil War Diaries by Pennsylvania Soldiers* from 2006. This year, 2016, marks the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of another Broadwater book from 2006: *The Battle of Olustee, 1864: The Final Union Attempt to Seize Florida*. This book, perhaps underappreciated, is an excellent chronicle and digest of the Olustee affair. The *Olustee Observer* reached out to Mr. Broadwater for a reflection on the book and the battle, as well as thoughts on the park and museum. The result was an in-depth 30 question/3 hour conversation that will be featured in this issue's *Reviewer* column.



Lt. Lorenzo Lyons of the  
48<sup>th</sup> New York Infantry  
Regiment



Lt. Henry Metcalf of the 3<sup>rd</sup>  
Rhode Island Artillery  
Regiment

Robert Broadwater's *The Battle of Olustee, 1864* follows the story all the way to Union General Gillmore's withdrawal of reinforcements from Northeast Florida when it became clear the Confederates would not launch an offensive against Jacksonville. General Truman Seymour's final directive was to hold the area in and around the city. Perhaps his last major singular action of the campaign was to build an armed camp at Palatka, a point from which to stymie harassments emanating from the endless river jungles and points further south. The 48<sup>th</sup> New York Regiment's unit historian left an account of their time at Palatka.

"The town was entirely deserted, with the exception of one or two families, at the time of its occupation by the regiment...The orange trees were loaded with large yellow fruit; but the oranges were rather sour for eating, although they made admirable orangeade. The gnats troubled the pickets more than the enemy during the month or more that the regiment remained at Palatka." Sgt. Patrick Egan, 3<sup>rd</sup> Rhode Island Artillery, wrote: "One of the objects of the Palatka expedition was the capture of a notorious rebel named Thigpen, who was furnishing supplies of beef and bacon to the Confederacy. Shortly after our arrival at Palatka the commanding officer sent for Captain James and asked to mount a part of his battery as cavalry and attempt the capture of Thigpen. We started out the next morning, about four o'clock with two Florida "Crackers" as guides. When a short distance from the home of Thigpen, Capt. James selected a dozen men and we made a dash for the house and surprised Thigpen as he sat on his porch with a rebel tax collector, who had his saddlebags spread out before them. We set fire to the buildings and destroyed them...returned to Palatka with 13 prisoners..."

# CSO MEETING NEWS

## *Website & Library Direction*

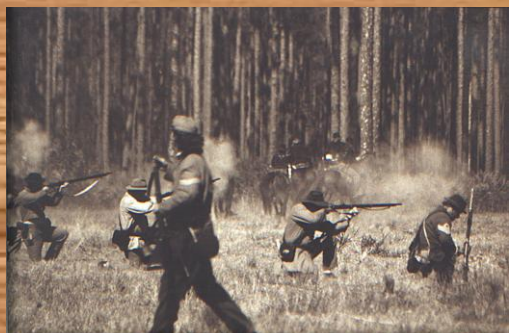
Paul Duran and Thomas Fasulo are still fine-tuning the navigation and aesthetic upgrades to the website ([www.battleofolustee.org](http://www.battleofolustee.org)). The main homepage is done, but among the pages still under construction are the ones to contain financial data. They have high hopes all the work will be done soon and ready to unveil before the next big event in February of 2017.

The 2-man committee has had several working sessions with the web designers from HostGator, where our website is hosted. In the process of upgrading, some longstanding online retail sales issues required working out. The team had to figure out what to charge for our "for sale" items on the site, working in enough profit margin to offset mailing costs. The question of bundling items into a package for sale is being considered. A decision was made to raise the price of some items, as they have remained at the same price for over a decade. Four or five pages of the site will be in an entirely new format. The rest of the existing pages already display well for mobile devices.

Regarding the site's performance over the recent construction, for the 12 months ending October 31<sup>st</sup>, 64,875 visitors viewed or downloaded 277,717 pages and files.

We're excited to see the results of the upgrade and will owe some big thanks to Paul and Thomas for their efforts in this project!

*Special thanks to Thomas Fasulo for contributing to this report.*



*Pictured left:  
"Confederate  
Skirmishers Initiate  
Battle"*

*Pictured right:  
"Confederates  
Regroup Over the  
Fallen"*



### Upcoming Meetings & Events

Questions and membership dues can be mailed to: Olustee CSO, P.O. Box 382, Glen St. Mary, FL 32040

The 2017 Annual Reenactment of the Battle of Olustee or Ocean Pond will be February 17-19.

Fees will be:  
\$10 for adults  
\$5 for children  
Pre-school age children are FREE

### Articles of Interest

As of the Nov. 1<sup>st</sup> deadline, 27 sutlers have registered and 3 are new. Several of our past sutlers are now out of business or not traveling as much.

As it stands now, we will have 2 authors and 9 educational exhibitors. Deadline for their registration is not until January.

Please visit the website at [www.battleofolustee.org](http://www.battleofolustee.org) for updated applications, forms, regs, & schedules

### Odds & Ends

Attention Reenactors! In February, be sure and sign in at the registration tent. There is NO fee and you become an official Florida State Park volunteer for the weekend

Visit [floridareenactorsonline.com](http://floridareenactorsonline.com) for a list of living history & reenactment events throughout Florida.

Questions on the park and annual reenactment should be directed to: [olusteeco@yahoo.com](mailto:olusteeco@yahoo.com)

## *Summer Field Day for Florida Humanities Council*

It was a blazing hot day in July when a busload of teachers stepped out onto the Olustee Battlefield Historic State Park, ready to be immersed in Olustee legend and lore. Here was another group of educators assembled by our friends at the Florida Humanities Council in Tampa Bay. Greeting them near the parade ground was our indefatigable all-purpose living historian Thomas Fasulo.

Final feedback was very positive and indicated the teachers really enjoyed the tour. One teacher, a published children's author, approached Fasulo about writing a story about Olustee for children. She would do all the writing while he would supply her with all the facts. Thomas stated the aspiring author actually teaches English on a Department of Defense base in Japan. She just happened to be in the states for the summer vacation. Just another example of how the CSO continues to enjoy a fun and productive relationship with FHC.

*Special thanks to Thomas Fasulo for contributing to this report*



*Veteran reenactor & CSO member Thomas Fasulo conducts a tour at the battlefield park*

# The Reviewer

Reviews and recommendations of related books, music, & film....

## ANTEBELLUM/CIVIL WAR FLORIDA -

*The Battle of Olustee, 1864* by Robert P. Broadwater

Every battle has its telling and re-telling. With Olustee, we've been fortunate to have some compelling published narratives through the years. Perhaps the first and most contemporary was released in 1865 when the ruin of war was still smoking in town & country. *The Rebellion Record, a diary of American events, with documents, narratives, illustrative incidents, etc.*, edited by Frank Moore had four narratives of Olustee in Volume 8. On Memorial Day of 1888, there was an address delivered in Augusta, Georgia, later published, entitled *The Evacuation of Battery Wagner and The Battle of Ocean Pond*. Also from 1888, *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War* edited by Johnson and Buell had a section called *The Battle of Olustee, or Ocean Pond, Florida* by Samuel Jones with comments from Joseph Hawley. In 1899, the Swamp Fox, JJ Dickison wrote his *Military History of Florida*. In 1913, William Watson Davis penned *The Civil War and Reconstruction in Florida*. In 1931, the *Florida Historical Quarterly* published perhaps its first significant address of the state's largest battle with George Baltzell's article entitled *The Battle of Olustee (Ocean Pond), Florida*. Then in 1950, 86 years post-battle, from the same state history periodical, came an extended article that many of us new to the game are familiar with: Mark Boyd's *The Federal Campaign of 1864*. In more relatively recent times, we've been treated to the outstanding Dr. David J. Coles' thesis and dissertation papers: *Far From Fields of Glory*, and *A Fight, A Licking, and a Footrace*. Then there's Lewis G Schmidt's *Battle of Olustee* installment in his extraordinary compilation series *The Civil War in Florida – A Military History*. Not to be omitted from this roster are the multitude of articles over the years from Richard Ferry and the late Gene Barbers; written with a local flair and polish that have always left us wanting more.

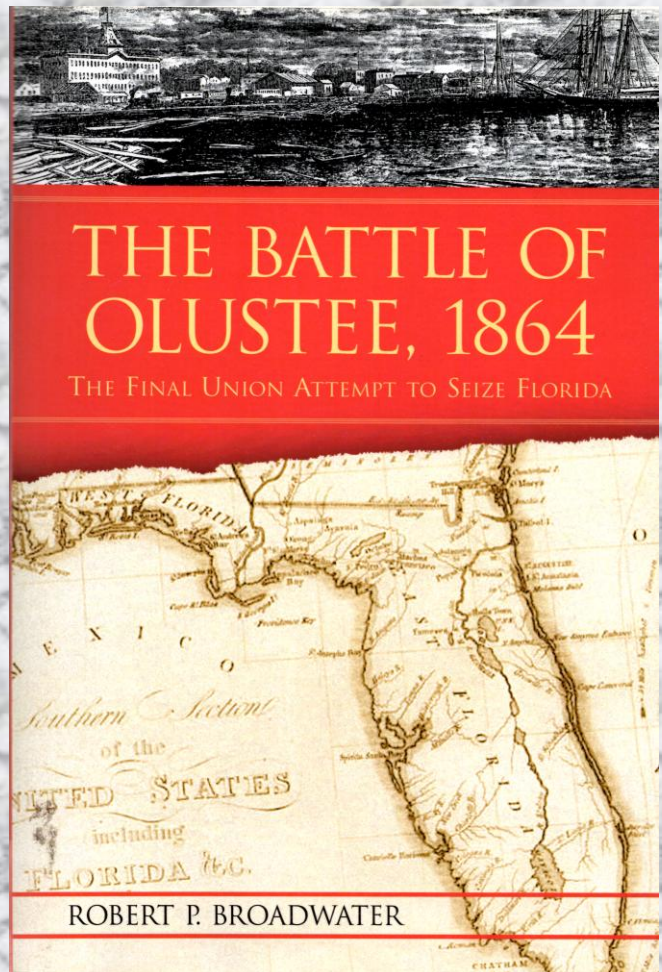
Then from the 21<sup>st</sup> century comes a fully self-contained book on the battle for retail purchase: *The Battle of Olustee, 1864 – The Final Union Attempt to Seize Florida*. McFarland publishing put us in touch with author Robert P. Broadwater. With this rare opportunity, the *Olustee Observer* endeavored to do more than just an enhanced book review. We wanted to pick the brain of this prolific author on a variety of nuances surrounding the topic.

OO (Olustee Observer): *Tell us a little bit about your background as a Civil War historian and author.*

RB (Robert "Bob" P. Broadwater): I got the bug for the Civil War when I was six years old and my parents took me to Gettysburg and that was it. Before long, I became a lifelong Civil War enthusiast. I have had to date 38 books and over 100 magazine articles published primarily on the Civil War and the American Revolution. My work has been nominated for the Lincoln Prize, the Douglas S. Freeman Award, and the George Washington Book Award. My book *Gettysburg as the Generals Remembered* It was selected for required reading for the United States Army War College.

OO: *That's a tremendous amount of work. Are you an author full-time? I mean you would have to be.*

RB: Oh, it's an avocation. By telling how much I've had



published, they wonder why there's no other type of work. Quite frankly, I only do military history. I don't write any Harry Potter or Fitzhugh Gray.

OO: So I would've thought you were a university professor and you would have ordinate of time to pursue these works during sabbaticals or what-not.

RB: Well, actually I am 37 years in the food service industry.

OO: So a "foodie" too.

RB: That's what pays the bills.

OO: *What first attracted you to the Olustee battle story? Of all stories, you've got this tremendous background, tremendous knowledge of Civil War history – but here's Olustee. You landed at the biggest battle that occurred in Florida.*

RB: Oh, a number of things. Principally, it was the fact that it was the largest battle to take place in Florida during the Civil War. You have to understand that as an author of Civil War material, there is so much competition out there and there are so many people out there looking to write on Civil War topics and so you are looking to do something that has not been written about or something that is under-reported. So Olustee met that criteria of a battle that had been largely overlooked by mainstream historians.

OO: I've done a fair amount of Civil War research, but I'm nowhere near an expert. Some of the really skilled historians I've encountered have more or less dismissed Florida – ahhh, nothing there, nothing to see, move along, but for me personally, I've found the opposite to be true. As I've delved into the Florida history component, helped along by works like Lewis G. Schmidt's *The Civil War in Florida – A Military History* (another Pennsylvanian by the way), I've been inspired to travel and visit these various regions of Florida where historic sites were mentioned and to learn more.

RB: There's actually a ton of stuff that happened in Florida. You had two things working: 1.) everything that took place in Florida was on a smaller scale than what was taking place in the rest of the Eastern United States. 2.) What was the population of Florida during the Civil War? It was very very low. Wasn't the white population of Florida something like 70,000 people during the time of the Civil War? So you did not have these centers of industry and media to get the word out of what was taking place in Florida. You didn't have a newspaper hub like you had in Richmond or Atlanta or some of the other major cities in the South and it's one of the reasons why the exploits of somebody like "Dixie" Dickison largely go unknown today and why they are a footnote in the history of the war because they were not reported when they were taking place. Dickison's exploits rivaled, if not surpassed, those of John Singleton Mosby's. Doing the things that he did and operating in the center that he was in operating in, he didn't get the recognition for it.

OO: I believe that to be true. My study of the Civil War in Florida inspired me to go back even further in my own ancestor's life. I learned through the study of his Civil War experience and then his life in general, that he had also served in the Second Seminole War. In fact, he did several tours of duty and it's so fascinating to hear of both Union and Confederate men that fought in conflicts here and

nationally, including none other than the likes of Meade and Sherman. They were here fighting the Seminoles.

RB: Absolutely they were.

OO: *So there's so much intrigue – a deep background extending 30 years or more with the same players - soldiers and statesmen – these men would be back in Florida or else hearing news from here. It's behind the scenes backwater intrigue and adventure on the sub-tropical frontier. What makes Olustee a unique story and this particular isolated piney palmetto spot a uniquely enduring setting for the study of a military battle?*

RB: Oh, there are several things. To begin with is how the campaign came to be. It was set in motion by Abraham Lincoln who was desirous of having the electoral college votes of Florida for the upcoming presidential election. The election was forecasted to be so close between he and McClellan that having the electoral votes from Florida was viewed by Lincoln and his advisors as maybe being a swing state that could bring in the election. When a party of Florida men came to Lincoln and told him that if Florida was brought back into the Union, they would vote for Lincoln in the presidential election, he took it upon himself to organize this campaign to bring Florida back into the Union. And the War Department really wanted nothing to do with it. They saw no hard advantage to having a campaign in Florida but this was something that Lincoln did on his own, frankly, for political reasons and you can strike up this as a reason that this battle is unique and something different in the annals of Civil War history.

OO: *Interesting. We'll touch on Lincoln more later because I do agree he plays a much under-appreciated role in this whole story. Let's talk about your research for this book. Did you come here to Florida? What books did you read? What was your process in preparing for this subject?*

RB: I didn't come to Florida for the book but I had been to Olustee a few times previously in the past so I was familiar with the battlefield as I said had been there on a few occasions. For the research, I have my personal Civil War library in which I have over 1300 volumes in hard copy and over 1800 copies on CD. So like I said my personal Civil War reference library is over 3100 volumes. So that's where I always begin and then when I need beyond that, I generally make a couple trips over to the National Archives in Washington, DC and usually can pick up what else I need to finish rounding out the story from the National Archives.

OO: *Is there an individual who stands out for you as the most interesting persona and why?*

RB: Oh, I like Finegan and the reason I like Finegan is because in this opportunity for independent command, I think he credited himself well on the field and I think he did a really good job of handling his troops and fighting the battle so I would say probably Finegan of everyone that was there.

OO: *How about on the Union side?*

RB: On the Union side, I don't know, Seymour didn't have the greatest of days there. Maybe Colonel Fribley.

OO: Good one.

RB: Maybe Colonel Fribley. The 8<sup>th</sup> was an untried unit that had never seen command bat before. He did his best to try to rally those troops to keep them on the field at the cost of his life because he was mortally wounded in trying to keep them holding their ground. So yeah—probably Charles Fribley.

OO: And his story continues on past his death – in trying to recover his body, as I recall.

RB: Yes. Yes. Well, you know, there were so many stories of the atrocities against the black troops on the field that day. And they spilled over to some of the white leaders of the black troops and yeah, Fribley was definitely among those and the Union army – when they tried to recover his body – and the Confederates, well let's just say, weren't real interested in identifying or recovering Fribley's body because he'd been leading a regiment of black soldiers on the field.

OO: *Other studies of the Battle of Olustee have pointed to the machinations of Judge Salmon P. Chase in the genesis of the Florida invasion, but you bravely, daring, lay much of the impetus with Lincoln. Not much has been written regarding Lincoln's views of Florida, but your book indicates he viewed Florida as an underestimated keystone to victory, at least to his re-election. Talk some more about the president and the Florida Expedition and why normal military channels were circumvented to conduct this invasion.*

RB: Well, you know, you said “bravely” I have chronicled Lincoln's leadership actually in making this campaign. The fact is Abraham Lincoln is such an iconic figure in our society today that God forbid anyone have anything derogatory to say about him because Lincoln has become the god of the United States over the years - - he's just a stainless figure who never did any wrong. Well, guess what? He did. And I was surprised that the movie *Lincoln* that Daniel Day Lewis was in couple of years ago showed as much graft and corruption as they did. Now it was sort of shown and twisted in a way to show the moviegoer that this graft and corruption was done for good reasons and that the ends justified the means but the fact of the matter is it did show a great deal of the dirty part of politics that Lincoln took part in during his administrations and that surprised me because that's usually not the case and that spilled into the Battle of Olustee. As normal storytelling, we don't want to portray Lincoln as doing something as self-serving as initiating a military campaign in an effort to help secure your re-election as president but that's exactly what took place. If you look at the documentations I have, the citations I have on material in the book, you'll see where it came from, you'll see that it is legitimate and as I said, fully documented. Lincoln circumvented the normal channels of military command because when the proposal was taken to Secretary Stanton at the War Department to make this expedition, Stanton wanted nothing to do with it and Stanton pretty much vetoed any efforts to mount a military campaign in Florida so Lincoln just circumvented the War Department and Secretary Stanton and took it upon himself to deal directly with Seymour and the military commanders who would be taking part in this campaign or having anything to do with the field of operations in which it would take place. He did everything on his own because Stanton wanted nothing to do with it.

OO: Many Southern descendants of war-dead would foster an enmity towards Lincoln. The loss of fathers can destroy households and unsettle the teaching of fatherhood from one generation to the next. I think for many such Southerners today, including descendants of Olustee casualties, especially as we're so

far removed from that time, it's hard not to love Lincoln. Our country has long needed a man to hang its hat on. Along with Washington, he seems to be “the guy”, but it is important, as you say, to the study of objective history, to be fair in our assessment of him.

RB: Yeah, absolutely, and what a lot of people don't realize is that Abraham Lincoln was one of the most hated people in the country, north and south, at the end of the Civil War, and it was John Wilkes Booth's bullet that changed all that and immediately upon his assassination, Lincoln became a martyr and the very people who held him up and ran with this whole martyr theme were the Radical Republicans. And the Radical Republicans hated Lincoln almost as much as the Southerners did during the war because Lincoln had attempted to hold them in check with the policies and stratagems that they wanted to use toward the South and so he enraged Chandler, Reed, and Thaddeus Stevens or whoever among that radical group; Lincoln had really stifled them during the war or done his best to do. And the very second that Lincoln is assassinated, it's this group of Radical Republicans that hold him up and say, “Look what they did to your sainted leader. Look at what they did to this great man.” And it was in an effort to move forward with the policy of severe punitive Reconstruction that the Radical Republicans had wanted. So they touted Lincoln and what a tragedy it was to the country and what a great man he was and the supreme sacrifice he'd made and they did more than any other group in the country to start this image of Lincoln as being the “stainless man”. And as much as any group in the country, they hated his guts. But they were doing it for self-serving purposes.

OO: Well, interestingly enough, I think in retrospect, Lincoln would have given the South a much better deal than they got and perhaps in hindsight, much ensuing hostility could have been averted. What do you think?

RB: Oh, absolutely. There's no doubt in my mind of that. Yeah, that whole period of Reconstruction would have been so much softened, so much more amicable.

OO: And I think so much of the results of that period carries through with us all the way to today.

RB: Oh, absolutely. Absolutely. There for a period of time, it cost more to ship things into and out of South Carolina than it did any other state in the Union and it was still punishment for the national perception that South Carolina was the state that had started the Civil War and that continued for decades after the Civil War. Shipping costs into and out of South Carolina were more. It was just pure and simple punishment.

OO: I would think Southern industry would have been impeded for many years after that.

RB: Oh absolutely. That was one of the residual effects and it was a calculated residual effect.

OO: *Talk about General Halleck's ambivalent, if not testy response to General Quincy Gillmore's proposal to invade Florida (at least perhaps secretly on behalf of the president). Do you think the reticence from Halleck and Secretary Stanton and the resulting lack of further troop commitment would end up contributing to the slaughter and misery of Union soldiers in Northeast Florida?*

RB: No doubt about it. No doubt about it. Had Seymour had a larger army, this whole campaign is going to have a completely

different outcome. And you're not gonna have Tallahassee being the only Confederate capital in the South still in Southern hands at the end of the war. The North would have, in my opinion, taken control of Florida had Halleck and Stanton released sufficient troops to Seymour to conduct the campaign in the way that Seymour wanted to do.

OO: *Speaking of Seymour, the vacillation of this general has long been a highlight in the Olustee narrative. At one point, he wrote, "The backbone of rebeldom is not here" and so forth. Then, conversely, he aspired to thrust the spear of the expedition all the way to Tallahassee. Talk about General Truman Seymour. What is your summation of the man and his performance in the sub-tropic theater of war?*

RB: Well, I don't think Seymour gave any real thought to where he was campaigning. The way that they pushed troops from the coast to the interior – these troops were worn out by the time they met Finegan's forces and by the time Finegan lured them into his trap at Olustee. And it was because Seymour, I don't believe, took into effect the draining nature of conducting campaign into those tropical conditions – into that heat. And I don't think he took enough rest for the troops or I don't know – paced their march in a manner that if they were called into battle, they would be as fresh as possible. I think that was a large factor in the outcome of the campaign. Even without all the extra troops that Seymour had wanted that Halleck and Stanton denied, the Federal troops would still have a numerical advantage: about 5500 to 5000. That numerical advantage was offset however by the way in which Seymour used his army and marched it across the middle of the interior.

OO: *There was some fascination with Jacksonville as the Federal flotilla landed. Some said it resembled a fine New England town. Others said it was in "rat soup" condition. In your mind, what was so interesting about these Union men, both whites and black, coming into contact with old Jacksonville and terra firma at last from the long sea voyage?*

RB: Well, I think to both white and black troops, particularly the white troops in Seymour's army, making landfall in Florida hearkened back to the days of the Spanish galleons, Ponce de Leon, and the Conquistadors. I think there was a feeling among Seymour's troops that they had just landed in an exotic location and to a certain extent for those troops, this was like a vacation setting. They had just arrived at a place where they heard about as boys and they had these visions of daring grandeur and of pirates and washbucklers, and now you're here. And I think that played a great deal in the perception that they had when they did set foot on terra firma at Jacksonville.

OO: So that mental imagery was alive then just as it is with young boys today who see *Pirates of the Caribbean* or read stories of seafaring exploration and adventure. That kind of envisioning and dreaming existed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century for those young men.

RB: Oh, absolutely and let's face it, their imaginations were far much more refined than the average person today. You know, today everybody's got their smart phone or everybody's got their computer and everything is instant gratification. Back then, you read the written word or you heard oral stories and you had to make pictures in your mind and everyone's imaginations were far much more refined than they are today. When you talk about that, people back in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, absolutely this was something that either it was as you imagined it was going to be or it was completely

different than the picture you had in your mind from imagery about this period and this place in American history.

OO: *And after the landing came the "March to the Interior" which was nothing if not dramatic. Abraham Palmer of the 48<sup>th</sup> New York wrote, "The march to and from Olustee was a terrible one, the roads often running through swamps where the water was knee-deep..." Much was written and recollected of this epic tromp. Major Appleton of the Mass infantry left some of the most articulate writings on the expedition. What is your estimation of that haul and reiterate how you think it affected the army's performance at Olustee?*

RB: It absolutely did. The vast majority of the regiments in Seymour's army were not fit. They hadn't eaten during this march and so they march out to Olustee for a battle and they were not fit for the return march either. And so these guys are making this march in tropical conditions and they're battling the ground as well as the enemy and they're being pushed in a hard march and not fed and absolutely it played a huge role in their performance on the field that day. These guys were badly exhausted when they hit the field at Olustee and faced Finegan's Confederates.

OO: *How much credit goes to General Pierre Beauregard and his skill in amassing enough Confederate forces in time to Florida to actually make victory possible?*

RB: Well, a great deal of credit and the fact is Beauregard just had a good sense to realize what the Federals were up to, that this was not just a raid into the interior as had been done many, many, many times by Federal forces; that this was an actual attempt by an expeditionary force to seize control of Florida and while in many ways, Florida was small potatoes strategically in the war, one thing that Beauregard realized was that Florida had become a foodbox for the Confederacy and the amount of cattle for one thing that were in the state of Florida was just a huge number because Southerners from other parts of the South, as the Yankee raiders had encroached upon their regions, had driven their cattle to Florida for safe keeping. There were just huge herds of cattle in Florida that were desperately needed for the Confederate army and Beauregard realized that if this was an actual expedition into the interior to take control of the state, which it was, that he needed to assemble whatever resources at his disposal that he could afford to send, and that he did.

OO: Do you think it was that bad with the Confederacy, with the lack of food, particularly protein? Do you think it was that dire – to make Florida that important?

RB: In February of '64, it was not yet that dire, but all things were driving in that direction. By February of 1864, wagons rolled. Your biggest supply structure for the Confederacy is now in Union hands because there are no more ships coming in from the outside world through the Port of Wilmington. And Lee's army was quite frankly being sustained by what was coming in through the Port of Wilmington. And when that fell, yeah, it hadn't become dire yet, but you were right on the doorstep and I think all Confederate leaders who had any knowledge of what was going on realized "we are right on the doorstep." And yeah, so you could not afford this being a 1-2 punch of eliminating Wilmington and eliminating the foodstuffs coming out of Florida.

OO: So much cattle was needed. A great deal of it had been coming from Texas and it had to cross the Mississippi. When Vicksburg fell to Grant--

RB: It just cut all that out!

OO: *We've talked about General Joseph Finegan and you've noted him as an extraordinary standout figure. Do you think this plucky Irishman, with his relatively limited military experience going in, could have potentially bungled the outcome or do you think he proved he had just enough innate leadership skill to carry the day?*

RB: I absolutely think in this particular situation, he showed that he did have enough leadership skills to carry out his mission. You got to remember he's commanding a little over 5,000 troops. It's not like he's on the field with 50,00 soldiers, or even with 25,000 soldiers and so many times people promoted beyond their capabilities – John Bell Hood is the absolute poster boy for that situation, of getting promoted beyond your capabilities – but Finegan in this situation; I think it was just right for him. For the number of troops that were involved, I think he showed himself to be more than up to the task of commanding in this battle.

OO: *Finegan your most notable Confederate, Fribble your standout Federal. Now that we're on the precipice of battle, what victorious Confederate unit stands out the most to you and why?*

RB: Hmmmm. That's a tough one. You have the Georgia brigade; the 64<sup>th</sup>, 32<sup>nd</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup> that are the ones who pushed Hawley's Brigade off the line and really set up the day for Finegan to win. I don't know which of those I would choose.

OO: Those 4 Georgia regiments set the tone of the battle.

RB: Yeah they did. They did a great deal of the heavy lifting, if you will, for Finegan's army. Once they'd cleared the way, the rest of the army was able to push 'em through. If I'm not mistaken, the 32<sup>nd</sup> Georgia in fact suffered the most casualties of any regiment in Finegan's army. Yeah, those 4 regiments – they're the ones that provided the push and then when Finegan did commit the last of his reserves, it just proved to be too much for the Federals at that point.

OO: *How about the Union?*

RB: The Union is real easy. Well, not exactly. The 8<sup>th</sup> United States Colored Troops and the 54<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts – I would probably rate them both equally. They had vastly different outcomes. The fact of the matter is the 8<sup>th</sup> United States Colored Troops – they took 300 casualties. Though they retreated from the field in a way that really helped foment the breakdown of the army in that part of the field, the fact of the matter is they stayed on the field for a long period of time. I have a habit of saying "green Civil War troops were too stupid to know when to retreat." The best example of that is the 120<sup>th</sup> Pennsylvania Regiment at Antietam. They get into the battle and being totally green, they don't know that the situation is totally against them. They don't have a chance and they should retreat or they won't get out. And that's what the 8<sup>th</sup> United States Colored Troops did for quite some time on the field and it was essentially because they were too green to know that "we don't have a chance, we need to be retreating." And so they stood and fought and they were slaughtered. The 54<sup>th</sup>, of course, covered the retreat of Seymour's army and did so gallantly. Do you recall in my book the story about the 54<sup>th</sup> marching out to 10 Mile Station? That's when there was a car full of Union wounded where the engine had broken down at 10 Mile Station, named so because it was 10 miles out from Jacksonville. And these soldiers, as I'd said, made this tremendous march out to Olustee and back without eating and the 54<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts was one of the many regiments who weren't fed during the march! So they march

out there. They fight a battle. They march back. They've had no sleep. They've had nothing to eat. And someone comes into Jacksonville and makes the announcement that there's a flag car of wounded soldiers out at 10 Mile Station and the engine has broken down and they're worried about Confederate cavalry capturing them all so they send the 54<sup>th</sup> to turn right back around. They'd just gotten into Jacksonville. They turn right back around and march out to 10 Mile Station and they bring the flag car in by just brute force and manpower. They tie ropes and grape vines and what-have-you onto the car and just pull it by hand. They manhandle that flag car for 10 miles in Jacksonville. To me, it's just absolutely amazing.

OO: It might be one of the great, historic moments in American military history.

RB: The absolute gallantry of it – the self-sacrificing of it – these guys are beat! But they're not going to let their comrades and compatriots get captured by the Confederates so they go out and they do this. Yeah, to me, them and the 8<sup>th</sup> United States Colored Troops.

OO: *Those Georgia regiments we mentioned were full of grit and determination in that first stage of battle. And speaking of the first stage of battle, it is interesting, from a narrative point of view, to say the least. Many accounts have it first commencing in what's been called the "Encounter at the Old Saw Mill". There are the stories of the 7<sup>th</sup> Connecticut shocking the rebs with their futuristic "repeating" rifles. What do you remember as anecdotal or impactful in the opening salvos?*

RB: I just remember first the Confederates were in a state of awe at the firepower that the 7<sup>th</sup> was allowed to put out. "The gun that you can load on Sunday and fire all week." They ran into a buzzsaw that they were not expecting at all and it was just a total shock to them."

OO: Welcome to the era of modern warfare where guns now shoot over and over again all by themselves.

RB: Absolutely.

OO: *You wrote that the men of the 8<sup>th</sup> United States Colored Troops were "accompanied by their mascot, an old white dog named "Lion", who had been with the regiment ever since it had been mustered in back at Camp William Penn, in Pennsylvania. One member of the ranks noted that the dog raced alongside the men and had 'no objection to being alongside the black soldiers.'." That's a story tidbit I don't recall from previous reads on this battle. It's one of a few that your book adds to the legend and lore of Olustee. Obviously, stories are a part of every battle but they loom large here. Talk about the gravity of "personal stories" and their preeminence in this fight.*

RB: Well, this battle – it was by Civil War standards a small battle and in fact, it was little more than a large skirmish by some Civil War standards, you know. Had this battle taken place at the beginning of the war – oh my God – you try and substitute this out for The Battle of First Manassas with the casualty rates that this had, the nation would have been shocked! And the nation should have been shocked even in 1864 because if you look at the casualty rates that took place in this battle – on the Union side, I believe, it was over a third. I think it was 33, 34% on the Union side and on the Confederate side, it was just under 20% and these are casualty rates that are higher than Gettysburg! In fact, it's in my book, I

have statements from soldiers on both sides who had served at other theaters and had been at Gettysburg that if there was a spot on that field that was as hot as where they were at Olustee, they never saw it -- because the fighting at Olustee was more savage and more barbaric than anything they'd seen at Gettysburg. So I think that plays into it greatly and why the personal accounts and why the personal reminiscences of this battle play so large is because it was such a nasty, hateful, costly little battle!

OO: *Do you have a favorite story from the battle?*

RB: Well, it's the 54<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts at 10 Mile Station. That trumps everything.

OO: *Lots of incredible stories, but in a contest, probably many would agree with that. There's a huge lake called Ocean Pond -- gorgeous, big, beautiful blue pearl of a lake. It borders the battlefield, but the general contention is no fighting occurred along the shorelines here. However, Southern horse soldier, William Penniman, recollected this: "We at the trot moved quickly by the flank, leaving the two armies opposite each other. In making this flank movement, not understanding the nature of the swamp called Ocean Pond, the larger part of our regiment went too far in and the horse sank to their bellies in the soft morass, causing us to lose a large number during the fight." Is it possible this indeed occurred within sight of the lake and that gunfire was exchanged in this extended periphery of the battle? Transport livery stuck in the mud would have made sitting ducks for targets, especially for cavalry.*

RB: From my research, I don't think any gunfire was exchanged there. I mean, Finegan pushed his forces out to make contact with Seymour's troops in advance of his initial position there. I think that was what you're referring to was just "maneuvering" of the forces and the officers who were in charge, as the soldiers did there as well, weren't familiar with the lowdown of the situation, just marched 'em into the swamp. But I really don't think gunfire took place there.

OO: *The artillery plays a huge role in The Battle of Olustee, in my opinion. Elder's Battery from the Union blue made a gutsy test run at the rebel line. They ran their guns "close up to the center of the Confederate line and opened up with a mixture of shell, solid shot, grape, and canister." The Confederates took this as a very serious, deadly challenge to the ground they held and so they responded in kind. You wrote that "Confederate artillery roared into action...and...rebel sharpshooters began to pick off officers and artillerymen." It's here that the Battle of Olustee became "general" as they say. One of our leading historians and relic collectors has 2 musket balls that collided in mid-air, forming a perfectly violent molten slag collision preserved for the ages. Talk about what was "general" at the Battle of Olustee for the next 4 very long hours. It may not have exactly been "general" for most battles.*

RB: Yes, Absolutely. That's what you had there -- a nasty hateful little fight -- and the guys who were in it, you know, most of them would point to it as the worst battle they were in for the rest of their lives. And as I said, many of these guys had served at Gettysburg and some of the other major battles of the war, but you know, like I said, the guys who were on that field point to it the rest of their life as the most severe, the hardest fought battle that they'd been in during the war.

OO: *One veteran described a certain portion of the field "as a place which was sufficiently hot to make the oldest and most*

*continued from left column*

*field-worn veterans tremble; and yet these men, who had never heard the sound of cannon before rushed in to where they commenced dropping like grass before the sickle." You've already mentioned these men before but talk a little more about the sacrifice of the 8<sup>th</sup> USCT.*

RB: Well, the 8<sup>th</sup> was brought forward with the 7<sup>th</sup> New Hampshire and when the Georgia Brigade attacked -- when they hit these guys and not only had they never been in battle before and never heard hostile shots fired, but the fact is, they had never even completed their training! They had been mustered into the service and had been sent south and they had become part of Seymour's army but their training was still in progress. You talk about being green! These guys were greener than green! One thing in the battle -- things had become so hot that the troops weren't taking time to pull their ramrods and tamp down the cartridges that they'd load. It was much quicker if you'd bite off the cartridge and put the powder down, put the shell down, and just stamp the butt of your musket against the ground -- and so when they're being assaulted by the Confederates and they see that in the battle when the bullets are flying so thick, they're colliding in mid-air, these black troops who had never been in battle before had taken to stamping their muskets down instead of pulling their ramrods and actually driving home their charges so that they could fire quicker -- but even with this resolve that they had and the determination to hold their position in the line, they were being slaughtered and their casualties were over 300. Once Fibley was shot down, it just became impossible at that point for them to maintain their position on the field and they eventually had to give way and retreat.

OO: *Would you consider the fall of the 8<sup>th</sup> the precipitous moment in battle where then Hamilton's Battery is mowed down, there's no one to cover them and the dominoes begin to fall?*

RB: Oh I think everything went to heck in a handbasket when the 8<sup>th</sup> left the field and as you said, the beginning of the dominoes -- exactly. From that point on, everything started falling bad for Seymour and the Yankee troops. The only bright spot he had was when the 54<sup>th</sup> covered the retreat and the 54<sup>th</sup> did an exemplary job of performing rear guard action but up until that point everything just went bad for the Union army from the time the 8<sup>th</sup> left the field.

OO: *And so casualties are reaching a grotesque number. Your account of Adolph Majer trying to establish a field hospital in the Union rear is unforgettable in its horror. This takes the battle from a memorable, hard fought test of valor into something else people would rather forget. Can you recall those moments and did that commonly occur in hotly contested Civil War combat, where for instance, a field hospital just gets blown to bits?*

RB: It wasn't a common occurrence but you know, the Confederates were pursuing and in the pursuit, the hospital took the worst of it and it's just pure and simple -- as much as anything, it was collateral damage. The Confederates were advancing. The hospital was just a little too close to Union lines and when they gave way, like I said, it was collateral damage.

OO: *You wrote, "One of Seymour's aides found the 54<sup>th</sup>'s commander, Colonel Edward Hallowell, and implored him forward at all possible haste. 'For God's sake, Colonel, double-quick, or the day is lost!'" What is your impression of this hallmark moment, and indeed, could this be an important moment in American military history?*

RB: Well, if the 54<sup>th</sup> hadn't held there, there's a real good chance

that Finegan would have been able to bag the entire Union army. Not only would that have been a huge loss for Union forces, but it would have been a disastrous blot on Lincoln's record because he'd been the one to back this and do it against the advice of the War Department and Secretary Stanton. So this would have looked horrendous in the press had an entire Union army been taken off the board following this battle, albeit a small army, but believe me, the Confederates would have made the most of it. It would have had severe repercussions toward Lincoln. Let's not forget, he's running in a re-election campaign in 1864 and we can't fail to remember how close he was to losing this if Sheridan doesn't have the big victory at Cedar Creek and there's this couple of events that turn the tide in Lincoln's favor. Taking a Union army off the board in February of that year could have played havoc with his election possibilities.

OO: *We're now at penultimate moment, as they say. The Confederates have reloaded and are pressing. The 54<sup>th</sup> Mass is not only squared off in a duel with the 6<sup>th</sup> Florida, they're probably taking cross-fire, and about to engage their role as a running rear-guard. This last stage of battle is extremely violent, but in the whole of the battle, start-to-finish, where do you think the hottest, most critical action was?*

RB: 32<sup>nd</sup> Georgia and 8<sup>th</sup> United States Colored Troops.

OO: *February is a very interesting month in Florida. It can get up in the high 80's during the day and into the teens at night! Florida cold near these temps is a damp bone-chilling thing, but we're often blessed in this month with the most beautiful sunsets. Here at this old map-dot Indian-spot called Olustee, sundown had dimmed the crack of musketry and the belch of cannon. Twilight brought respite for the victors and another kind of hell for the vanquished. In the annals of the Civil War, was there ever a retreat, wrought with misery and fear, like the one from Olustee to Jacksonville?*

RB: No. No. I mean there were atrocities that took place on other fields of battle, but no, to answer your question, there was not another one that had the fear that went along with the retreat from Olustee.

OO: *Comment on the aftermath murders of wounded black troops on the battlefield by a handful of vengeful Georgia troops. Do you think this action mars the legacy of the battle?*

RB: I'm glad that you said "handful" because this was not an action that was participated in by the majority of the Confederate troops by any way, shape, or standard. It was a minority. It was a very small minority; however, minorities can serve to besmirch the reputation of larger groups in an organization and that's what happened here. It does affect the legacy of the Battle of Olustee. I don't know how it could not do so. I mean you can't have soldiers roaming the battlefield killing wounded enemy troops just because of the color of their skin. That's something, particularly in this age, is so heinous that it can't help but mar the legacy of the battle. I don't think it destroys the legacy by any stretch of the imagination. I think what took place there during the battle was a great military feat for the Confederates and for General Finegan. I think you have to look at it in two segments: you have to look at the battle and you have to look at the aftermath -- what took place after the battle was over -- and you really can't combine the two.

OO: *Speaking of this being a great military victory, do you think this rebel triumph prolonged the Confederate war effort as the foodstuffs were enabled to continue moving and nourishing the Southern troops on the front lines?*

RB: Oh, sure. Sure. By what period of time? I don't think it was a great appreciable period of time but it absolutely would have helped them add a few months to the end of the war because if you look at the starving condition of Lee's troops by the end of the war, that probably would have been taking place a few months earlier had Florida fell and the Union taken control of it.

OO: *From Jacksonville to Chattahoochee, the wounded from Olustee were strung out for nearly 200 miles. There was a large makeshift field hospital at Barber's Plantation in present day MacLennny. If I recall, Gene Barber wrote they 'bout never got the blood stains off the floor of his ancestor Mose's cabin. This was one of the first public watershed events in Florida. It was all-hands-on-deck. Hearts were opened and hands were put to work. The Southern boys got sympathetic care but what about the enemy wounded?*

RB: From Florida citizens? I think all the wounded received adequate care from both sides. By this point in the war, there was a lot of hatred and animosity on both sides and no, they weren't getting any kind of loving care but I think they were getting the necessities. And at this point, that's all you can ask for.

OO: *It's time for reflection. What is the enduring facet of this battle that causes casual historians and passing-by citizens to revisit it time and time again?*

RB: I think it's just the absolute barbarism of the battle itself. You're on a field here where I don't know if any other field had fighting as savage as here and where these guys suffered so acutely and I think the Union side still held their ground as long for as they did and tried to make a battle of it. There's more than enough valor to go around on both sides and I think that's what makes this battle something that people want to continue to re-visit and continue to come back to. It's just the severity and the savagery of the fighting that took place there.

OO: There's a couple fundamental reasons for the draw of this battle by a contemplating public and as an object of study. But what is the more encompassing legacy of this clash in the middle of the woods or is there one?

RB: There is. There is. Once you get involved in this battle and start picking apart the finer features of it, you start studying the United States Colored Troops, the 54<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts, you start studying the 7<sup>th</sup> New Hampshire and other stories of the regiments that fought there. Once you're lured into it, that's what helps to keep you there and that's what helps to make this a battle so rich in stories of men who fought there. You become interested in Colonel Hawley, Colonel Fribley, Finegan, and Seymour, and Colquitt, and the guys who performed these great heroic acts -- once you delve into it, they trap you and keep you there.

OO: Yeah, in a way, it seems a battle like this, as I guess alot of Civil War battles do, for better or worse, become a stepping-stone for individuals to conduct deeper research into that particular ancestor.

RB: And let's face it, there's only over 10,000 troops involved. You can study this battle and become quite proficient at knowing what took place on that field and researching the lives of the men who were there because it was a small battle. This isn't Gettysburg. This isn't Antietam. It's not Chancellorsville. You don't have 100,000 men on the field. You have 10,000. So from a historical aspect, it's much more compact and it's easier for most

historians to study because of the fact that there's relatively so few troops involved and the information is so compact and I think that's a reason for people to be drawn to it as well.

OO: The citizen support organization for the park has garnered a 1.2 million dollar grant for a new museum—

RB: Oh, I know all about it!

OO: *The museum committee is currently developing content and flow for the new interior exhibits display. What would you like to see in the new museum?*

RB: You can go to the Gettysburg Heritage Center. It used to be the old Gettysburg Wax Museum. Right after the Gettysburg 150<sup>th</sup> a couple of years ago, they transformed into the Gettysburg Heritage Center. And they totally re-did their museum and it has become one of the places that people point to as must-see when they're visiting Gettysburg. The reason is they have just done simple little things like putting plaquards on the wall with statements, reminiscences of people who were at the battle, in the battle, soldiers, civilians, what they experienced during the battle. When people go through this heritage center now, it is not so much about the battle as it is about the people and about the personal events. I'll give you an example. You sit on a bench and the doors are closed on either side. There's a little window up at the top of the room that you're sitting in. Now this window doesn't actually look outside. There's little lights that are broadcast through it. And it is the experience of being a civilian and hiding out in one of the Gettysburg basements as the soldiers were going past, as the fighting was taking place. You get this experience of seeing what it was like to be one of the citizens as all hell was breaking loose you were hiding in your basement trying to escape it! And the whole museum is like that! They took what was a traditional museum before and turned it into kind of a "home of the people". And it's been immensely popular with the tourists in Gettysburg ever since they opened it up. I'd like to see something like that. I'd like to see some reminiscences and statements of the individual soldiers. I'd like to see something that would give visitors there a deeper understanding of just what these people went through and what they experienced when they were there.

OO: Wow. A very creative out-of-the-box perspective they created there.

RB: I'm sure you can Google the Gettysburg Heritage Center and you might be able to get some idea of what I'm talking about there. They did a complete transformation on it. They took it from being a dying museum there at Gettysburg to being a hot-spot!

OO: *What else would you like to see on the battlefield premises as the museum grows into a complex with perhaps more than one building looking years down the road? (library, theatre/folk music hall, etc.)?*

RB: Oh, those things would be great. That would be great. People today, particularly when you're dealing with the millennials, they are interested in more entertainment than education and if you can surround the education with entertainment, they're more than willing to learn but they want to be entertained in the process. The folk music venue and stuff you suggested there would be wonderful. You got to hook 'em. You gotta hook 'em in somehow and however it is you can get them interested and get 'em on the line and set that hook, that's what you need to do. I do a lot of speaking and most of the groups that I speak to, I'm generally the oldest person in the room and I'm 58. And I look around and I think in a few more years here, these organizations, these groups

are gonna cease to exist – 'cause there's no young people com'in in, stepp'in forward for these things. So we've got to do whatever we can to get these younger people interested and as I said, set the hook, and develop that love for history 'cause otherwise everything all of us are doing in the historical field at some point in time is all going to be for naught because we're not going to have the base of enthusiasts to carry forward.

OO: Over the years, I've found the historical associations and societies to be safeguards for real history. As they pass, we stand the danger as a nation or society, of being overwhelmed with revisionist history.

RB: Yes. I try to revoke revisionist history whenever I can. I hate politically correct or revisionist history. What happened happened. You report it. And the other thing is – you do not omit the parts of the story that don't support your thesis. You give the people all of the information and let them make up their minds for themselves.

OO: Yes. Bob, it's been terrific talking with you. We thank you. We hope to hear from you again. Let's stay in touch. Have a great night!

RB: It's been a pleasure talking with you.

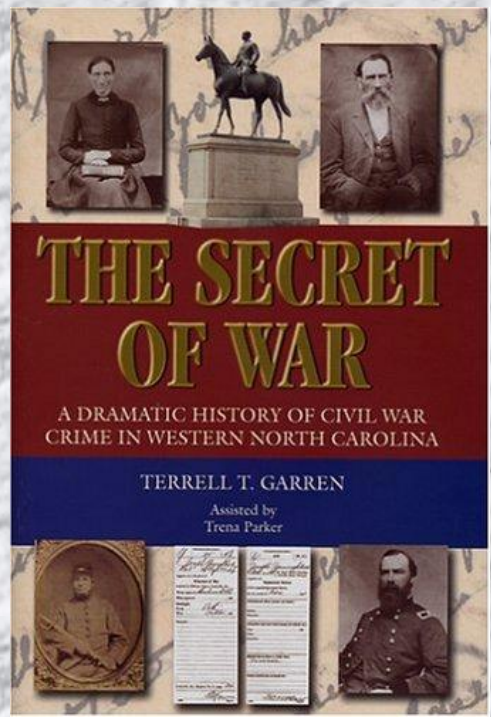
*The Battle of Olustee, 1864 – The Final Union Attempt to Seize Florida* is available from Amazon.com and Biblio.com. It's an excellent, compelling read and as one of the few self-contained singular books on the subject, it makes a perfect addition to any history library. And just in time for the holidays.



## CIVIL WAR

*The Secret of War – A Dramatic History of Civil War Crime in North Carolina* by Terrell T. Garren

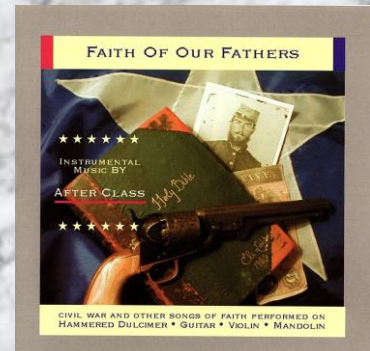
Up until recently, my family had long kept a summer campsite in Haywood County, North Carolina. It's extremely rugged high mountain country with a handful of picturesque valley towns. One of my favorite backcountry hikes puts you in eyesight of the mysterious Cold Mountain. The now-classic film, based on the people from the faded ghost town of the mountain, easily ranks as one of my favorite movies. Well, one day while my mother was out shopping around in the relatively cosmopolitan town of Waynesville, she met author Terrell T. Garren at a book-signing. Bless her heart, she was smart enough to pick up a nicely signed and messaged hardcover copy for me. It sat for a while before I could find the time to start it. When I finally did I wasn't really prepared for the deeply disturbing nature of it. Here were mountain people, little exposed to slavery or external economic pressures, often viciously divided against each other, and subjected to the ugliest manifestations of war imaginable. This is the story of evil seeping into the mountain Eden. The characters are believable, made all the more engaging with their grounding in reality. The precipitative incident was revealed to Garren by his Aunt Burdette Youngblood Horton as she lay dying in the hospital in 1989. He spent 15 years with the research and crafted an unforgettable, creative, narrative-style story based on the facts so much as they could be empirically surmised. The story begins with the frenetic burial of a coin jar and carries forward, or backward, to shed light on the severely tested life of the author's great-grandmother, Delia Russell Youngblood. Dr. Newton Smith, Associate Professor of English at Western Carolina University had this to say: "*The Secret of War* is that rare historical novel that captures both the romance and the grit and gore of war on the home front without disturbing the history. It is about time someone did the story of the Civil War in the southern mountains right." – Terrell



## ROOTS & FOLK MUSIC -

*Faith of Our Fathers* – After Class

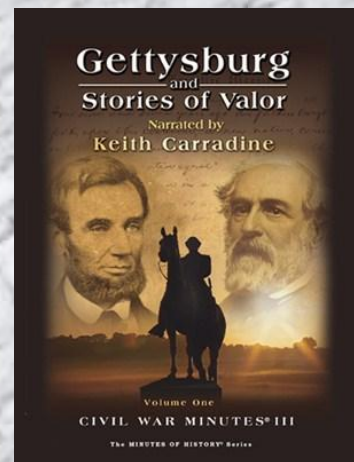
This is our first review from the work of one of my favorite folk bands, *After Class*. It's a collection of songs of faith that were popular in the Civil War era – all instrumentals performed in hammered dulcimer, guitar, violin, & mandolin. You'll often find the music of these Birmingham boys in sutler's tents. Rob Angus, Mark Weldon, & Brant Beene bring their soothing, Celtic, high-country sounds to some of the great hymns like *Amazing Grace*, *Rock of Ages*, *Just As I Am*, *It Is Well With My Soul*, *Jesus Loves Me*, & *Nearer My God to Thee*. It's a beautiful, reflective compilation that wraps you in a warm blanket no matter what your musical tastes are. This '99 release is still widely available off Best Buy, Amazon, CD Baby, CD Universe. Also released in an angel statue cover. – Terrell



## FILM -

*Civil War Minutes III – Gettysburg and Stories of Valor* - Inecom

We reviewed *Civil War Minutes I & II* in the Summer 2015 newsletter. Vol. I was an excellent primer on the Union army and II did a fine job with exposition on the Confederate. Now *Civil War Minutes III* goes beyond the basics and offers up a unique collection of 30 stories about people and artifacts from the Civil War. Disc 1 deftly explores the nuances of the war's biggest battle -- from Colonel Strong Vincent's defense of Little Round Top to President Richard Nixon's great-grandfather's grave, from the mysterious Devil's Den photographs to Confederate General Lewis Armistead's secret distress call! But wait, that's not all. In Disc 2 of this 2-disc set, the producers also explore details such as "The Dead Line" in Andersonville, the medical and surgical history of the war, and the explosion at Allegheny Arsenal. This fine production is narrated by star of stage and screen, Keith Carradine. The production also has a feature-length commentary track and interviews from the writers about the cultural and military significance of Gettysburg. It's "edutainment" time well-spent -- keeps you glued. Available from Target.com, Amazon.com, and BestBuy.com. – Terrell



# Historical Profile

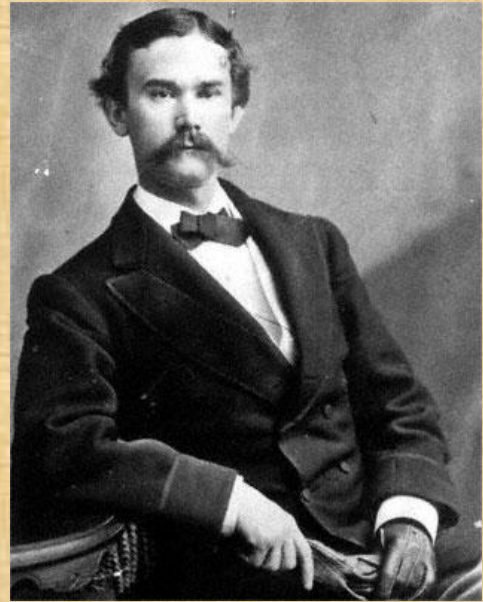
John Hay, born in 1838 to an anti-slavery family, would serve in a long and distinguished career as an American statesman and official. In addition to his service to our nation, the graduate of Brown University co-authored an epic 10 volume biography entitled *Abraham Lincoln – A History*. Perhaps he is best remembered as the president's personal secretary.

Hay worked in the Lincoln campaign and first came to know the then President-elect while clerking in his uncle's law office in Springfield, Illinois. John G. Nicolay, Lincoln's secretary at the time, saw potential in the young man and arranged to have him accompany the staff to Washington.

Hay was friends with Mary and Abe's son, Robert Lincoln during their time in the capital together. Indeed, he would become almost a surrogate son himself to the president. Hay's presence in the White House would become integral and vital. Journalist John Russell Young likened the relationship to that of Hamilton and Washington. He recalled that Hay *"knew the social graces and amenities, and did much to make the atmosphere of the war environed White House grateful, tempering unreasonable aspirations, giving to disappointed ambitions the soft answer which turneth away wrath, showing, as Hamilton did in similar offices, the tact and common sense, which were to serve him as they served Hamilton in wider spheres of public duty."* Historian Michael Burlingame wrote that *"Hay's humor, intelligence, love of word play, fondness for literature, and devotion to his boss made him a source of comfort to the beleaguered president in the loneliness of the White House."* He oversaw White House security and with Nicolay, managed the office's expense account. In this aspect, he clashed with the first lady whom he referred to as the "hellcat". Perhaps this would lead to his reassignment as a diplomat to Paris in 1865.

Lincoln's secretaries were far more than pencil-pushers. They were often sent out on special assignments. Hay's Florida mission was not without considerable danger. As Robert Broadwater mentioned, the re-election race with McClellan was so tight, a repatriated Florida could be the swing state (as it was destined to be). When a group of prominent Floridian Unionists met with Lincoln, they all but guaranteed a Lincoln win if the old Spanish dominion could be militarily secured with armed occupation and loyalist citizens reassured of their safety. Of course, the requisite number of votes would need to be secured from the state officially in rebellion. Lincoln wrote to the southeast departmental commander, General Quincy Gillmore, *"I have given Mr. Hay a commission of Major and sent him to you with some blank books and other blanks to aid in the reconstruction. He will explain as to the manner of using the blanks, and also my general views on the subject. It is desirable for all to cooperate; but if irreconcilable differences of opinion shall arise, you are the master. I wish the thing to be done in the speediest way possible, so that when done it will be within range of the late proclamation on the subject."* Hay had carefully prepared addresses to the Florida citizens and was supplied with certificates to be given to all who took the oath of allegiance. As the expedition progressed, Hay would express some serious concerns. His analysis would manifest true in the Olustee woods.

## Major John Hay



John Hay also shared with President Lincoln a great love of good writing, literature, and the theater. He stood by the deathbed that fateful night Lincoln was shot at Ford Theater.

After the president's death, he served in several diplomatic posts throughout Europe. He left for the private sector, for a period, to work under Horace Greeley at *The New York Tribune*. John Hay returned to the executive branch of government serving as Ambassador to Great Britain in 1897-98. His highest office he would be Secretary of State under both the administrations of William McKinley and Theodore Roosevelt (1898-1905).

Secretary of State John Hay first developed the "Open Door" in China. He authored an official series of notes to secure international agreement to the United States policy of promoting equal opportunity for international trade and commerce in China, and respect for China's administrative and territorial integrity. Once in writing, this would develop into official policy toward the entire Far East in the first half of the new century. Interestingly, Hay also called for various internal Chinese powers to do away with economic advantages for citizens within their respective spheres of influence. He suggested Chinese tariffs apply universally and be collected by the Chinese themselves. This was all aimed at non-discrimination in commercial activity. The 1901 Boxer Rebellion (named for the martial artists that started it) backed by Empress Dowager Cixi, killed thousands of Chinese and hundreds of missionaries. It threatened Hay's positive progress in China. As foreigners huddled in Beijing awaiting military rescue, Hay worked to prevent world powers from using the violent revolution as an excuse to carve China into colonies. Hay would also negotiate the Hay-Pauncefote Treaty and helped arrange for construction of the Panama Canal.

## Osceola National Forest Highlights

**Bear Alert** – Bears have been on the rebound in Florida lately, is a good thing! But on your next fall walk through Osceola, be aware of bears. **It's necessary to store your food in an approved bear-proof container while camping in the Osceola National Forest.** [A Supervisor's Order is in effect outlining the Food Storage Restrictions](#) necessary for securing your food from bears. For specific details on how to store your food and the dangers and penalties for not storing it correctly, read [Be Bear Aware!](#)

**Scenic Driving** - What a great time for a drive through Osceola National Forest! Fall colors are abounding in the various hammocks. So you don't get lost or take a bad road, here's an important message from our friends in the ranger office: *All roads open to the public for motorized use (licensed vehicles) are numbered. Roads without numbers are no longer open for motorized use. The Motor Vehicle Use Map (MVUM) is the official map showing the numbered road system. Please contact us if you have questions or comments about the numbered road system. Unimproved roads (sometimes called pig trails or two track roads) which remain open for motorized use, are signed with a flat brown post and vertical white numbers. These roads are not maintained and may require 4 wheel drive to navigate.*

### "FROM THE OCEAN POND PHOTO ARCHIVES"



"The Toll of Victory" Terrell, 2001  
(Battle of Olustee Reenactment Photo Gallery Archives)

## EDITOR'S CORNER

As the new museum begins construction in 2017, we have much to look forward to. It occurred to me that we actually have not just 1 - - but 2 world-class museum-content producers working for us! (Riggs Ward Design and Wilderness Graphics!) Let's just say whatever the results, it will be exciting. it will be dynamic, it will be richly educational, it will be thought-provoking, it will be inviting, and it will be fun! Thank you to the sharp eyes on the museum committee. Thank you to the hard work and perseverance of our architect, BFB. Thank you to Riggs Ward and WG for their consultations and for pushing the creative design envelope. Let's stay tuned!

I wanted to slip in a plug for my friends in the Vasco family. They do an outstanding job sharing their Seminole heritage with the Alligator Warrior Festival! The Native-American legacy is something all Americans have the opportunity to embrace as a special, inseparable part of our national heritage. Seminole history and culture is such a vital and integral part of Florida. I just wish there were more events like this around the state. Every year, Micco Vasco and his clan make it better and better. There are Native-Americans from as far as the Great Lakes region visiting and plying high quality pottery, period weaponry, furs, beautiful handmade flutes, and other items. The setting is on the blackwater banks of the Santa Fe River as it rolls and foams under the swinging suspension bridge with that huge old beautiful Civilian Conservation Corps cabin overlooking it all. The setting culminates in a scaled down Battle of San Felasco Hammock reenactment. In 1836, some of Osceola's forces clashed with 25 regulars and 100 mounted militia from Fort Gilleland over a wagon train of supplies. I had never been to O'Leno State Park before attending this festival a couple of years ago, and I was struck by its beauty. This is an early fall/October event, so the temp is always good and you get a touch of leaf change. It's a great accompaniment to the Olustee events in winter and another reason the Baker/Columbia/Alachua County area is a great destination. It's a little late to promote it now, but keep an eye out for it mid-October next year. Visit [www.AlligatorFest.org](http://www.AlligatorFest.org)

**Alligator Warrior Festival**  
at Florida's O'Leno State Park



**Historical Photo**

Above: In Robert Broadwater's book, "The Battle of Olustee, 1864," he describes one of the last actions of the Federal expedition was the 3<sup>rd</sup> Rhode Island Artillery leaving cannon behind, mounting up and going on a manhunt in Palatka. In this rare photograph (courtesy Library of Congress), we see the 3<sup>rd</sup> undergoing small arms weapons inspection at Fort Wagner in South Carolina (probably prior to Olustee)