



HFCWRT Monthly Newsletter

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- DATE:** Wednesday, June 14th, 2017
- TIME:** Dinner 7:00 PM; Program 8:00
- PLACE:** Camp Hill Methodist Church, Harpers Ferry, WV
- MUSICIANS:** Melanie Climis and Robert "Frenchie" Prosser
- MUSIC:**

The Musicians:

Melanie Climis has been playing a number of instruments for a lot of years, on stage and socially. She has been helping people with musical questions for almost as long. And she has been solving “this hurts” kinds of issues along the way.

She can help with a variety of instruments and with finding the most relaxed way to say what you want to say musically. But she has to mention her special love for old-time Southern Appalachian Mountain Music.

Nothing makes her happier than to be part of a jam that lasts for hours, with fellow old-time enthusiasts sharing tunes and stories. “Okay, I lied: there are times when I’m just as happy playing those spooky, twisty, windy old tunes that were made just for solo enjoyment. Either way, we’re all links in the beautiful chain that is our rich Appalachian heritage.”

Melanie has been fortunate enough to have had lots of time with some of the Kentucky and West Virginia field collectors, with our treasured fiddlers and banjoists, both elder statesmen and young hotshots. “Name dropping to follow in personal conversations if you really need it.”

The Meal

A family-style meal will be served at 7:00 PM prior to the program. The cost of the meal is \$15.00 per person. Reservations for the meal **must be made no later than Sunday, June 11**, with Kevin Pawlak at 16kpawlak1829@gmail.com or (585) 880-0425. The meal will consist of Sliced Baked Ham With Raisin Sauce, Savory Rice, Seasoned Green Beans, Rolls, Butter, Iced Tea, Coffee, & Dessert.

A War of Words: The Rhetorical Leadership of Jefferson Davis Hardcover – June 6, 2017 by R. Jarrod Atchison

A War of Words analyzes Jefferson Davis’s public discourse, arguing that throughout his time as president of the Confederacy, Davis settled for short-term rhetorical successes at the expense of creating more substantive and meaningful messages for himself and his constituents.

Numerous biographies of Jefferson Davis have been penned; however, until now, there had been no substantive analysis of his public discourse as president of the Confederacy. R. Jarrod Atchison’s *A War of Words* uses concepts from rhetorical theory and public address to help answer a question that has intrigued scholars from a variety of disciplines since the collapse of the Confederacy: what role, if any, did Davis play in the collapse of Confederate nationalism?

Most discussions of Davis and nationalism focus on the military outcomes of his controversial wartime decisions. *A War of Words* focuses less on military outcomes and argues instead that, in the context of the Confederacy, Jefferson Davis’s rhetorical leadership should have been responsible for articulating a vision for the nation—including the core tenets of its identity, the values the nation should hold dear, the principles it should never compromise, and the goals it should set for its future. Undoubtedly, Davis possessed the skills necessary to make a persuasive public argument. It is precisely because Davis’s oratory skills were so powerful that there is room to judge how he used them. In short, being a great orator is not synonymous with successful rhetorical leadership.

Atchison posits that Davis’s initial successes constrained his rhetorical options later in the war. *A War of Words* concludes that, in the end, Davis’s rhetorical leadership was a failure because he was unable to articulate a coherent Confederate identity in light of the sacrifices endured by the populace in order to sustain the war effort.

General J. O. Shelby at Clarendon Arkansas

The Capture and Destruction of the U. S. S. Queen City

by Don Roth (Camp Pope Publishing, 2017)

Upon the costly but successful conclusion of the Camden Expedition (the Arkansas wing of the Red River Campaign) in spring 1864, the Confederate leadership in the Trans-Mississippi sent Joseph O. Shelby and his command behind enemy lines into NE Arkansas. There, the newly promoted General Shelby became in effect the sole Confederate military authority in the region, suppressing outlaws and guerrillas, vigorously enforcing conscription in anticipation of a fall expedition into Missouri, and conducting hit and run attacks on Union forces.

One of Shelby's most notable military achievements during this period was his brigade's surprise attack and destruction of the tinclad gunboat U.S.S. Queen City in June 1864. That dramatic event is the focus of Don Roth's book *General J. O. Shelby at Clarendon, Arkansas: The Capture and Destruction of the U.S.S. Queen City*. A slim volume of only 60 total pages, the study consists of a narrative history of the operation plus a number of brief appendices, among them a partial roster of Bledsoe's Battery (the unit that battered the vessel into submission), a sampling of artifacts taken from the wreck during a 1977 archeological survey, and a list of black sailors rescued from the sinking.

Also covered to satisfaction in the book is the Union response to the loss of the Queen City. Fearing the captured vessel's conversion into a Confederate gunboat, federal authorities quickly outfitted against Shelby a powerful naval flotilla accompanied by a full infantry division with a sizeable mounted detachment. Roth ably recounts the running engagement that ensued. Though Shelby and his field guns were overwhelmed by the Union Navy's weight of shot, the well-mounted Confederates were able to escape with relative ease. In the process, however, much of the fruits of Shelby's victory were lost. Due to the swiftness of the enemy's reaction, much of the offloaded equipment had to be abandoned and the disabled tin-clad with its precious heavy guns burned to prevent recapture.

The Queen City escapade offers a clear demonstration of the danger that mobile Confederate forces armed with artillery posed to Union military and civilian shipping on the western rivers, a threat that was fully appreciated at the time by both sides. The pair of previously captured Parrott rifles used to rapidly force the surrender of the formidably armed Queen City are illustrative of how much more damage could have been inflicted had Confederate forces in the West and Trans-Mississippi not been saddled with so much third-rate artillery, and even worse ammunition, throughout the war. Also, the ease of Shelby's escape further showcased the futility of using primarily infantry (no matter what the number involved) to catch veteran cavalry.

The text is marred by a number of typos, but the main complaint is with the cartography. The two maps that are present are fine enough representations of the geographical area involved and Shelby's movements in the region, but no small-scale maps depicting either the June 24 fight at Clarendon or the revenge-seeking Union expedition that followed the Queen City's capture were included. (Even *marred* publications deserve review and to be read as it appears to be a solid study. Comment from the HFCWRT newsletter editor.)