Subject: Little Known Civil War Fact
Posted by elektratig on Sat, 12 Feb 2005 21:41:49 GMT
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I've been reading voraciously about the US Civil War for the past six months or so. Yesterday, I stumbled across the following nugget: but for the fact that U.S. Grant's wife detested Lincoln's wife, Grant would have been sitting with Lincoln at the theater the night Lincoln was shot.After accepting Lee's surrender at Appomattox, Grant returned to Washington. Lincoln invited the Grants to accompany him and his wife to the theater. Mrs. Grant confessed to her husband that she detested Mrs. Lincoln, who had been rude and condescending to her on previous occasions, and refused to go. Grant begged off, and the couple left for their house in Burlington, NJ.

Subject: Re: Little Known Civil War Fact
Posted by Manualblock on Sat, 12 Feb 2005 23:14:27 GMT
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I used to work with a civil war buff. We called him the "Hat", because he always wore a confederate army hat. His desk was filled with maps of Chancellorsville and Gettysburg. At a meeting we would always make it a point to mention the Civil War, because he would fall asleep otherwise.Funny to hear someone yell over;"Hey,Hat; you want pizza?" or "Phone call for the hat!"

Subject: Re: Little Known Civil War Fact
Posted by elektratig on Mon, 14 Feb 2005 00:40:06 GMT
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MB,Just to reassure you, I haven't gone that far around the bend. I wear no confederate hat -- indeed, if I wore one it would be a Union hat.

Subject: Re: Little Known Civil War Fact
Posted by Manualblock on Mon, 14 Feb 2005 12:22:24 GMT
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As long as you have declared your sympathies for our cause; Sir.You're around the bend when you start dragging your family to Civil War battlefields on vacation.

Subject: Re: Little Known Civil War Fact
Posted by elektratig on Mon, 14 Feb 2005 13:57:08 GMT
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Rest assured, I "root" for the Union whenever I read about the Civil War. Indeed, it's often painful for me to read about many of the Eastern campaigns, because the Federals were so often badly defeated. Consider:First Bull Run - DefeatShenandoah Valley Campaign -- DefeatPeninsula Campaign -- DefeatSecond Bull Run -- DefeatAntietam -- TieFredericksburg -- DefeatMud March -- DefeatChancellorsville -- DefeatGettysburg -- VictoryMine Run Campaign -- DefeatLuckily, the Union was blessed with the two greatest men of the era, Abraham Lincoln and Ulysses Grant. I am firmly convinced that both were essential to victory.Since my obsession is relatively new, I have never visited a Civil War battle site. That may change this coming summer, however.Little known Civil War fact No. 2: Ulysses Grant's original name was Hiram Ulysses Grant. His family called him "Ulys". When he went to West Point, he inverted his first and middle names because he did not want his luggage to bear the initials "HUG". When he arrived at West Point, the Army listed him as "Ulysses S. Grant", because that was the name under which his sponsor had submitted his application (presumably because his mother's maiden name was Simpson). The Army, being the Army, told him that it had admitted "Ulysses S. Grant" and that, if he was not "Ulysses S. Grant", he should go home.

Subject: Re: Little Known Civil War Fact
Posted by Manualblock on Mon, 14 Feb 2005 15:22:05 GMT
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Little known fact. Over 60% of the Union dead were Irish immagrants right off the boat from Ireland. Check the names on the rolls of the dead, O'Hanlon/Dillon/O'Malley. They stepped off the boat in Manhattan and into a uniform. Funny thing is things were so bad in Ireland they were happy to do the fighting as long as they got fed.The Union Army was pretty much a mercenary group of Europeans.In terms of Noble Aspirations the Confederacy was fighting for their way of life; by that time the cotton gin was in use and slavery was no longer profitable anyway. By the year 1800 one cotton gin and a couple mules could clean more cotton in an hour than a team of men could in a day.Also the trade routes from India were supplying all the cotton Europe could use anyway. History is written by the victors.

Subject: Yank, Tip your hat to the Stars and Bars
Posted by colinhester on Mon, 14 Feb 2005 18:16:34 GMT
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You have never been to battlefield?!? Man, as a kid my dad drug me around to every Civil War battlefield, cemetary, road side marker in the entire known world.....Colin (Southern by the grace of God) Hester

Subject: Re: Little Known Civil War Fact
Posted by elektratig on Mon, 14 Feb 2005 23:49:49 GMT
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MB,I was not aware of the statistics you cite, but Scorsese's "The Gangs of New York", set in Five Points immediately before the Draft Riots, has a scene in which Irish immigrants are enlisted as they come down the gangplank.On the other side, Patrick Cleburne was an Irish Protestant, born and raised in County Cork, who came to the US in about 1850 and wound up in Helena, Arkansas. He had served for several years in the British Army. When the war came, he helped to organize and trained local volunteers, who were ultimately absorbed into the Army of Tennessee. He became probably the best Confederate general in the West, seeing heavy service at Shiloh, performing extremely well at Stones River, and saving the army at and after Chattanooga. In the winter of 1864, he proposed to Joseph Johnston and other senior commanders that the Confederacy incorporate Blacks into the army; needless to say, the proposal was turned down (the Confederacy ultimately began doing so in the closing months of the war). He was, in effect, murdered by John Bell Hood at the Battle of Franklin on November 30, 1864 when Hood destroyed his army in a fit of anger and revenge by sending it against entrenched Federal positions.
Stonewall of the West

Subject: Re: Little Known Civil War Fact
Posted by Manualblock on Tue, 15 Feb 2005 00:18:48 GMT
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Nice way of expressing these historical tid-bits. Reading about WW II I see that over and above the movements and tactics of the conduct of the war; aspects such as food and shelter needed by such large accumulations of troops effect the outcome more so than we would suspect.Most evident example is the number of troops died in WW I of Ptomaine poisoning was greater than military deaths. And many in the Civil War died of Sepsis and pnuemonia. It makes you wonder.The most surprising aspect of our Civil War is the length of time the armies held up around Washington without any real combat. I am not educated but I believe it was General Mead at that time?The blockade; wasn't that crucial to the Union success?

Subject: Re: Little Known Civil War Fact
Posted by elektratig on Tue, 15 Feb 2005 03:16:37 GMT
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MB,You're absolutely right -- logistics were crucial. The sizes of the armies -- 40,000 to 60,000 to 100,000 or more men -- were unprecedented. Just keeping them armed, clothed, supplied, fed and reasonably healthy was a tremendous task.It's amazing how many survived their wounds, including amputations. Among the generals, both Richard Ewell and John Bell Hood survived

wounds that required amputation of a leg close to the hip, perhaps to the detriment of the Confederacy. Probably the most famous victim of sepsis/pneumonia was Stonewall Jackson. After being shot by "friendly fire" on the evening following his greatest victory, he had his arm amputated and seemed to be recovering, but then relapsed and died, apparently due to pneumonia.Surprisingly, the experts seem to believe that the blockade contributed little to the Union victory. It's an area I don't know a lot about and want to learn more.Washington was fortified, much as Richmond-Petersburg were. As I'm sure you know, much of the Eastern (Virginia) war was fought in northern Virginia, not all that far from Washington -- First and Second Manassas, Fredicksburg, Chancellorsville, the Wilderness. Even Sharpsburg (Antietam) and Gettysburg are not all that far away. There were only a few Confederate direct approaches to Washington, however, because (apart from political scare value) they served little purpose, although the threat of attack did tie up 20,000 - 50,000 troops covering the city. As late as July 1864, when the Army of the Potomac was beginning its siege of Richmond-Petersburg, Lee detatched a corps that marched to the gates of Washington but then turned back because it could not successfully attack the city (due to the defenses, reinforced by a Corps sent by Grant from the Richmond theater).George Meade assumed command of the Army of the Potomac from Joe Hooker days before Gettysburg (July 1-3, 1863). When Grant took command of the armies in March 1864, Meade offered to resign. Grant, impressed, declined the offer, and Meade remained in command of that Army through the end of the war. He performed extremely well at Gettysburg -- amazingly so in view of the fact that he had just assumed command and had been told little of what was going on by Hooker -- and for that we all owe him a debt of gratitude, but he was not an "offensive" general and his performance was mediocre at best thereafter. During the Overland Campaign (the May - June 1864 campaign that resulted in the siege of Richmond), Grant increasingly took over operational control of the Army of the Potomac.By late March 1865, when the Petersburg defenses collapsed, Phil Sheridan was unoffically in charge as Grant's most trusted confidant and spearheaded the drive to Appomatox. Meade was ill and followed along in an ambulance and was not present at the surrender.

Subject: Re: Little Known Civil War Fact
Posted by Manualblock on Wed, 16 Feb 2005 00:31:53 GMT
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Nicely put and informative. The last book of War History I read was The Fall of Berlin by Anthony Beever. Positively ghastly. So what are your Civil War recommendations?

Subject: Re: Little Known Civil War Fact
Posted by elektratig on Wed, 16 Feb 2005 03:39:55 GMT
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MB,I read The Fall of Berlin last summer. An excellent and, as you say, ghastly book.James McPherson's Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era is almost universally regarded as the best

intro to the Civil War.If you want to try a campaign history, I'd suggest starting with McPherson's Crossroads of Freedom: Antietam. He does an excellent job explaining not only the campaign but, more importantly, its context and pivotal importance. Antietam was the climax of Lee's first invasion ("raid" is probably a better description) of the North, in September 1862, the year before Gettysburg. Had he won a victory there, the outcome of the war might well have been different, because mid-term elections were pending in the North. It also tells the story of The Lost Order, by which McLellan discovered that Lee had split his army -- one of the most amazing and improbable tales ever recorded.If you wanted to try one book on a Western campaign, I'd suggest Wiley Sword's Mountains Touched With Fire: Chattanooga Besieged, which tells the dramatic story of the November 1863 Federal charge up Missionary Ridge, breaking the center of the Confederate line -- something that just didn't happen during the Civil War, witness Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg. The victory cemented Grant's reputation (even though the charge was unplanned and unordered) and led to his appointment as head of the federal armies the following March. It also positioned the army for Sherman's Atlanta campaign in May.Ulysses Grant is my idol. As I said before, I am convinced that the North would not have won the war without him (and Abe Lincoln, of course). He was a failure before the war and repeatedly made mistakes during it, and no one could really figure out why he was so successful. His best friend, William Sherman, confessed that he didn't have the slightest idea what made Grant great. I heartily recommend the first volume of Brooks Simpson's two-volume biography, Ulysses S. Grant: Triumph Over Adversity, 1822-1865, which explains his genius as well as anything I've read. His decency, common sense, practical intelligence, patience, utter calmness and confidence in adversity, flexibility, willingness to learn from his mistakes and dogged determination won the war. Come to think of it, he sounds a lot like Abe, doesn't he?If there are particular things, battles, people, issues that interest you, let me know.e