



Free Press Viewpoint

Are Blue and Red today's Civil War?

Monday was the 150th anniversary of the bloodiest single-day battle in American history.

On Sept. 17, 1862, Union forces under Maj. Gen. George McClellan attacked Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee along the Antietam Creek near Sharpsburg, Md. It was the first major battle in the Civil War.

The Confederate force, outnumbered nearly two to one, fought the Union Army to a standstill. Lee withdrew the next day and poor Union leadership allowed him to escape.

The result: 3,654 men were killed, with another 17,000 wounded, all of them Americans. The true tragedy is that the battle was tactically indecisive. Though the Union force was superior, McClellan failed to commit much of his army and ended up letting Lee escape, something that would plague Union commanders throughout the rest of the war. The only bright spot about the battle for the Union was that it ended Lee's invasion of Maryland.

Had McClellan pressed his advantage, he might have been able to destroy Lee's army and end the threat of the Confederacy's single greatest general.

Twenty thousand men was a large price to pay with little to show for it.

Americans today are not used to those kinds of casualties in war. In the entirety of the Iraq War, 4,805 Americans were killed in eight years. Compare that to nearly 5,000 dead in three days at Gettysburg and 6,821 dead in 30 days on Iwo Jima.

Modern wars are different, and while the sacrifice of our soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines is no less meaningful today, we should still take lessons from our past.

The United States has become increasingly divided in recent years. It is no longer the Blue and the Gray, but the Blue and the Red. We have become as bitterly separated over things like health care and Social Security as we were over slavery and states' rights 150 years ago.

We simply cannot afford another Civil War. The last one cost more than half a million lives and completely destroyed the economy of the South.

What would a civil war look like today? Red States and Blue States are scattered around, and no state is completely homogeneous between liberals and conservatives. There would be no Mason-Dixon line, no clear dividing line between opposing nations. It would truly result in a country going up in flames.

The bottom line would be that with advances in technology, another civil war would be utterly devastating. America nearly destroyed itself 150 years ago, and if brother fought against brother today, it would truly destroy itself.

We must remember that there is more that unites us as Americans than divides us, that despite our political differences, we must learn from our past and keep those differences in the realm of discourse, and not let it come to arms.

—Kevin Bottrell, Goodland Star-News

Write us

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COLBY FREE PRESS

155 W. Fifth St. (USPS 120-920) (785) 462-3963
Colby, Kan. 67701 fax (785) 462-7749

Send news to: colby.editor@nwkansas.com
State award-winning newspaper, General Excellence, Design & Layout, Columns, Editorial Writing, Sports Columns, News, Photography. Official newspaper of Thomas County, Colby, Brewster and Rexford.

Sharon Friedlander - Publisher
sfriedlander@nwkansas.com

NEWS

Kayla Cornett - Sports Reporter
colby.sports@nwkansas.com

Marian Ballard - Copy Editor
mballard@nwkansas.com

Sam Dieter - News Reporter
colby.editor@nwkansas.com

Christina Beringer - Society Reporter
colby.society@nwkansas.com

ADVERTISING

colby.ads@nwkansas.com

Kathryn Ballard

Advertising Representative
kballard@nwkansas.com

Kylee Hunter - Graphic Design
khunter@nwkansas.com

BUSINESS OFFICE

Office Manager

Melissa Edmondson - Office Manager
medmondson@nwkansas.com

Evan Barnum - Systems Administrator
support@nwkansas.com

NORWEST PRESS

Richard Westfahl - General Manager
Jim Jackson, Jim Bowker, Gary Meyer, Pressmen
Lana Westfahl, Judy McKnight, Kris McCool, Sheri Arroyo,
Tracy Traxel, Mailing

THE COLBY FREE PRESS (USPS 120-920) is published every Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, except the days observed for Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day and New Year's Day, by NorWest Newspaper, 155 W. Fifth St., Colby, Kan., 67701.

PERIODICALS POSTAGE paid at Colby, Kan. 67701, and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Colby Free Press, 155 W. Fifth St., Colby, Kan., 67701.

THE BUSINESS OFFICE at 155 W. Fifth is open from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday to Friday, closed Saturday and Sunday. MEMBER OF THE ASSOCIATED PRESS, which is exclusively entitled to the use for publication of all news herein. Member Kansas Press Association and National Newspaper Association.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES: In Colby, Thomas County and Oakley: three months \$35, one year \$85. By mail to ZIP Codes beginning with 676 and 677: three months \$39, one year \$95. Elsewhere in the U.S., mailed once per week: three months \$39, one year \$95.

Romney aides claim that attacks on U.S. Embassies wouldn't have happened if Romney were in the Oval Office.

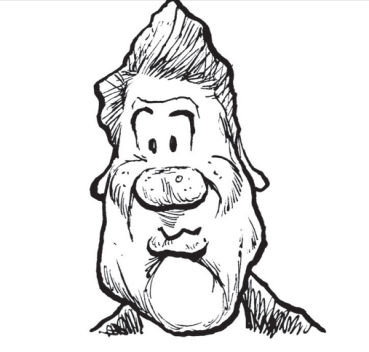


Then that would be a first!

Attacks on U.S. diplomatic facilities during presidency. 3



Attacks on U.S. diplomatic facilities during presidency. 5



Attacks on U.S. diplomatic facilities during presidency. 7



Attacks on U.S. diplomatic facilities during presidency. 12



Attacks on U.S. diplomatic facilities during presidency. 1



Attacks on U.S. diplomatic facilities during presidency. 4



Train trip turns into trying experience

There must be half a dozen tourist trains in Colorado, and at least three of them are in or near the San Luis Valley, where we go to relax and rejuvenate each summer.

The biggest and fanciest is the Durango and Silverton line, which runs from, amazingly, Durango to Silverton. You can ride in private cars, parlor cars, Pullman cars or by plain old coach. They all take you the same place, through the gorgeous Rocky Mountains. The big difference is the price. You can pay \$189 for a seat in the fancy cars or you can enjoy a regular coach seat or stand in the open gondola car for \$81 a person.

Either way, you go from the college town of Durango up to the mountain mining town of Silverton for lunch and then back by train or by bus, your choice. The train is cooler, but the bus is a whole lot faster.

We love the Durango and Silverton, but it's about half a day's drive over the mountains to get there. We either have to spend a couple of nights in Durango, or leave and return from our place in Creede at unholy hours of the morning and night.

I wasn't up for either this year, but I really wanted to ride on a train. More than that, I wanted to try the parlor car. I wanted to sit in a car with a couple of dozen chairs lined up



Cynthia Haynes

• Open Season

looking out the windows on both sides and an attendant to bring my hot chocolate, sodas or a snack. I wanted to see how the other half lived, or at least traveled, in the 1900s.

The closest was the Rio Grande Scenic Railroad, which had trains departing from Alamosa, about an hour and a half away, each morning and had both regular and parlor-car seats. This trip looked ideal. It was closer and cheaper than the Silverton train, and we could get to Alamosa and back on the same day with ease. The trip wasn't quite as long or spectacular, but it's always fun and interesting, and ends at the little mountain town of LaVeta.

However, they didn't have any seats left in their parlor car. Must be popular.

Well, with my heart set on the parlor car, I started checking again.

My next choice was the Cumbres and Toltec Scenic Railroad, which runs from An-

tonito, Colo., to Chama, N.M., with a stop in the middle at Osier, Colo., about halfway, for lunch. Actually, to do this involves two trains, one coming from each direction. If you take the trip all the way from Antonito to Chama, you have to return on a bus. Or, you can take the train from either end to Osier and return to your destination on that same train.

This time, I lucked out. Two seats were available in the parlor car. I booked them, and we were off.

Our train almost got out of the station at Antonito before it broke down. We were soon transferred to a bus and driven to the other end to meet the train coming up from Chama. Most of us got to sit in the half-empty parlor car, but a few folks lost their fancy seats.

Steve and I lucked out, however, and got parlor seats.

I think that has probably used up my allotment of luck with trains, so I'll just take a coach seat next time, or just take the ding-dang bus.

Cynthia Haynes, co-owner and chief financial officer of NorWest Newspapers, writes this column weekly. Her pets include cats, toads and a praying mantis. Contact her at c.haynes@nwkansas.com

Lesson learned through live chicken

The title "Five day campout on four days of food and a live chicken" describes a lesson at the Hong Kong International School, where I taught many years ago. The description of this optional outdoor education unit for our middle school students made it clear that the culminating activity would be the killing, dressing, cooking and eating of a chicken for the last day's dinner. There would be no other food available that day.

After four days of providing chicken feed to their last meal, the kids were given a cleaver and their live chicken. No kid was forced to kill the animal. Some chose to go hungry that day.

Among the "objectives" of the lesson: "don't expect someone to do something for you that you are not willing to do for yourself," and "there is a connection between the plastic-wrapped, sanitized piece of meat in the supermarket and a living animal."

Our grandparents knew where their meat came from. They knew what "butcher knives" were used for. But every year, our next generation of youngsters has less and less exposure to the realities of what happens at a packing house. It is time for the educational system and the meat processors to get back into reality education.

Unfortunately, today, lawyers in the distant offices of various meat-packing firms, are making it difficult for Kansas biology teachers to do the most elementary of dissection lessons. Nothing generates more awe and respect for the complex structures in an eye than the careful dissection and examination of a cow eyeball. Yet several major packing companies have closed off our long-standing access to cow eyeballs on the grounds that nerve tissue might carry mad-cow disease. It is a non-existent problem — there are no "mad cow" prions in today's cattle herds in the United States.

Any teacher who wants to take students on a tour of a Kansas packing plant is out-of-luck, as our industries hide their processes behind



John Richard Schrock

• Education Frontlines

closed doors. This secrecy gives animal-rightsists a big advantage.

Part of this week's Kansas State Fair is a competition among our 4-H kids who show livestock and sign "intent to sell" forms — they know where their food comes from. But our city kids often haven't a clue how their hamburger or chicken gets into their favorite sandwich. As rural populations shrink, we cannot afford to see this imbalance between the aware and the ignorant grow.

Temple Grandin, the Colorado State University professor of animal science who has designed livestock handling facilities used by meat processing plants, agrees. Speaking at the Animal Science Conference and Venture Forum on Sept. 5 at the MinnWest Technology Campus in Willmar, Minn., she explained: "We've got to show what we do. We've got to get over being bashful."

As reported in the *West Central Tribune* in Willmar, "Grandin urged the industry professionals at the conference to 'show stuff done right' and to 'put up tons and tons of videos showing the entire process....'"

Far from driving students away, she contends that this understanding will encourage many young people to consider agricultural technology as a career.

We do not need to look out of state to see examples of students who entered nursing and medicine because of their experiences with meat processing. In an earlier interview, one-time governor candidate and state Sen. Jim Barnett told the *Emporia Gazette* that his interest in medicine began from his examining

the entrails of a chicken his mother had prepared for dinner.

The current educational oppression of No Child Left Behind testing has prevented teachers taking any field trips, let alone trips to cattle lots and packing plants. But middle school is the age that my Hong Kong school and Temple Grandin recognize is the time for this reality check with interesting lessons.

Kansas schools need to introduce our agriculture, ag-technology businesses and related careers to students in middle school. We need the participation of our meat industries and they need to be fully open about what they do. Over time, it will take the impact away from animal rightist sensationalism.

At last week's conference, Grandin summarized it clearly: "If you don't show kids interesting stuff, they won't get interested in interesting stuff."

John Richard Schrock is a board member of the National Animal Interest Alliance and trains Kansas biology teachers at Emporia State University. This column represents his personal views only.

Where to write, call

U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts, 109 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. (202) 224-4774
roberts.senate.gov/public/

U.S. Sen. Jerry Moran, 354 Russell Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510 (202) 228-6966. Fax (202) 225-5124
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Mallard Fillmore

• Bruce Tinsley

