

THE BATTLE CRY



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ELEPHANTS IN THE CIVIL WAR?

Lincoln Rejects the King of Siam's Offer of Elephants

FEBRUARY 3, 1862

NEXT PROGRAMS

Feb. 14, 2017: Frank Crawford: "My Civil War Hero"

Mar. 14, 2017: Lee White: Battle of Chickamauga. Battle of Franklin.

Meetings 2nd Tues. of the month (7 pm) GRACE CHURCH ADULT ANNEX, 8000 Bee Ridge Rd, Sarasota, FL 34236. *On occasion time and location of the meeting will be changed.*

SHIRTS?

A few of our members have asked if any of our SCWRT shirts can be purchased.. We would need to know how many would commit to the purchase before we can quote you a price. To be discussed.

To the King of Siam
February 3, 1862

Abraham Lincoln,
President of the United States of America.

To His Majesty Somdetch Phra Paramendr Maha Mongut,

King of Siam,

&c., &c.

Great and Good Friend: I have received Your Majesty's two letters of the date of *February 14th., 1861.* [ed's Italics]

I have also received in good condition the royal gifts which accompanied those letters,---namely, a sword of costly materials and exquisite workmanship; a photographic likeness of Your Majesty and of Your Majesty's beloved daughter; and also two elephants' tusks of length and magnitude such as indicate that they could have belonged only to an animal which was a native of Siam.

Your Majesty's letters show an understanding that our laws forbid the President from receiving these rich presents as personal treasures. They are therefore accepted in accordance with Your Majesty's desire as tokens of your good will and friendship for the American People. Congress being now in session at this capital, I have had great pleasure in making known to them this manifestation of Your Majesty's munificence and kind consideration.

Under their directions the gifts will be placed among the archives of the Government, where they will remain perpetually as tokens of mutual esteem and pacific dispositions more honorable to both nations than any trophies of conquest could be.

I appreciate most highly Your Majesty's tender of good offices in forwarding to this Government a stock from which a supply of elephants might be raised on our own soil. This Government would not hesitate to avail itself of so generous an

offer if the object were one which could be made practically useful in the present condition of the United States.

Our political jurisdiction, however, does not reach a latitude so low as to favor the multiplication of the elephant, and steam on land, as well as on water, has been our best and most efficient agent of transportation in internal commerce.

I shall have occasion at no distant day to transmit to Your Majesty some token of indication of the high sense which this Government entertains of Your Majesty's friendship.

Meantime, wishing for Your Majesty a long and happy life, and for the generous and emulous People of Siam the highest possible prosperity, I commend both to the blessing of Almighty God.

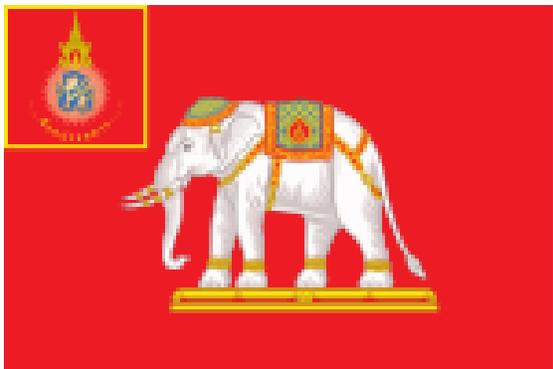
Your Good Friend, ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

Washington, February 3, 1862.

By the President:

WILLIAM H. SEWARD, Secretary of State.

Annotation



King Rama IV of Siam (Wikimedia)

In one of the more humorous events of the Civil War, President Abraham Lincoln politely rejected an offer of elephants from the King of Siam. While the letter from Rama IV (aka Mongkut) was addressed to former President James Buchanan, it was up to Lincoln and his Secretary of State William Seward to politely decline this offer from afar. As Lincoln points out in his reply, steam power had overtaken the need for heavy animal power of this kind.

This friendly exchange has elicited many fanciful "what-ifs." What if the Union or Confederate army had use of battalions of war elephants during the Civil War? Could there have been herds of angry pachyderms at Pickett's Charge or emerging from the forest lines at Shiloh?

They really had a dialog with each other and from the Thai historical view point the King was insulted.

For comments on this event, both pro and con, see civilwartalk.com

[taken from the Civil War Trust]

LIMERICK FUN

*The excitement of battle is heady,
But his judgement was calm, always steady,
Analysis proves
He made the right moves,
But never before he was ready.
Who am I?*

TRIVIA QUESTIONS

- Who had the code name "Major Allen"?
- Before the war William T. Sherman served as superintendent of what school?
- On May 12, Grant sent 60,000 men against a salient in the confederate line, what was the salient called?
- Whose reserve corps helped fortify Thomas' line at Chickamauga?
- What Ohio native and minstrel performer composed "Dixie" while living in New York City?
- What was the first major Southern city to be permanently occupied?



BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Civil War history is often presented in terms of white Northern actors fighting against white Southerners, with African Americans waiting on the sides as their fate was decided. Of course, this is far from the truth. What may come as a surprise to some is the fact that both the Union and the Confederates brought African American troops to the battlefield. Before the Civil War broke out in 1861, there were an estimated almost four million slaves in the United States, and just under 500,000 free African Americans. Combined they comprised about 14 percent of the country's population.

Of these 4.5 million, some 180,000 African Americans served in 163 units for the Union army as well as surely thousands more in the Navy. However, while only one percent of all African Americans in the United States resided in the North, slaves and freedmen only began serving the Confederate Army in 1865, and did so to a far lesser degree than in the North. It took a clear and dire urging from the beloved General Robert E. Lee to convince the Confederate Congress to begin enlisting black soldiers. The legislation required the consent of the slave and his master, and would confer the rights of a freeman after the war. Yet a month after the order came out, Virginia was only able to muster some forty or fifty enlistees.

Units from the United States Colored Troops (USCT) fighting for the Union made their mark on Civil War battlefields in every theater of the war. Though seen by white soldiers and officers as lacking the courage and ability to fight and fight well after Congress allowed the enlistment of African Americans in July 1862, after just three months the 1st Kansas Colored Volunteers had changed everyone's minds. The Union victory at Island Mound in October 1862 was the first engagement of African-American soldiers, during which the 1st Kansas proved their mettle as soldiers.

Cases of African American units' essential involvements abound throughout Civil War history, in nearly every major battle except Sherman's invasion of Georgia. One might wonder how the course of the Civil War could have been different if the South had not been so reticent to muster some of its non-white population to Civil War battlefields.



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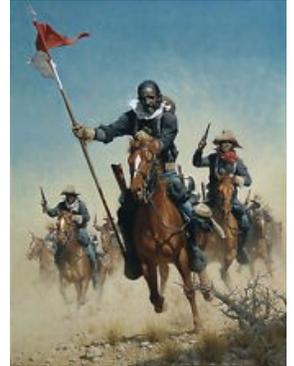
Anyone interested in receiving "The Battle Cry" by e-mail please see Bruce Maxian at one of our meetings or e-mail me at:

Sarasota.cwrt@gmail.com

Meetings 2nd Tues. of the month (7 pm)
GRACE CHURCH
ADULT ANNEX, 8000
 Bee Ridge Rd, Sarasota, FL 34236. On Occasion time and location of the meeting will be changed.

PLEASE WEAR YOUR T-SHIRTS TO THE MEETING. IN THE MEANTIME WEAR THEM WHEREVER YOU ROAM.

OUR MONTHLY RAFFLE ALWAYS NEEDS YOUR DONATED BOOKS & MAGAZINES.



BUFFALO SOLDIERS TODAY

Their mission is education, as they primarily visit K-12 schools to inform people of the derivation of the "Buffalo Soldiers" and their role in American history. Three of the men spoke, two troopers and one Master Sergeant, at a meeting of the Civil War Round Table of Tampa at which I had the pleasure of hearing of their activities and more about the Buffalo Soldiers.

Largely unknown or misunderstood Negro troops, in their beginning, had participated in Washington's armies for independence and served with Andrew Jackson at New Orleans in 1815. However, their presence in the American Civil War has become better known due to the movie "Glory". General David Hunter organized a Negro regiment but was unsuccessful in its approval. Months later Colonel W.T. Higginson of Massachusetts commanded the First Regiment, South Carolina Volunteers, the first slave regiment in the United States. At wars end, 180,000 Negroes had served and 33,380 died serving the United States. While Negroes served in the Confederate Army there seems to be no record explaining why they served the South or the numbers and losses they account for. There is support for stating that the Negro soldiers were good fighters, the first Medal of Honor was awarded to a black soldier for his service at Battery Wagner, S.C. At first there were no black officers. Whites only were promoted to or already held rank as an officer. Issues of second class treatment arose, including the enlistment process, quality of: uniforms, food, poor horses for Negroes in the cavalry, and high on the list was the major inducement for enlistment was the promise to learn to read and write. These issues and more resulted in mutiny and riots.

In 1867 Negro cavalry units were moved west, their presence lasted about 20 years. Upon arrival at the forts it was found that all were in disrepair. Indian fighting added to the duty,

It was the Kickapoos who won most battles with the Negroes. The name "**Buffalo Soldiers**" was given to the Negro troops by the Indians who felt the dark skin and strange kinky hair of the Negro soldiers was similar to the "mighty" buffalo.