

# THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

Volume XXVII, Number 7

Chicago, Illinois

March, 1967

## Harold Simpson - 'Jeff Davis and U.S. Camel Corps' - Mon., March 20

A man who is known to us by frequent mention in the newsletter finally will appear in the flesh as speaker at our meeting Monday, March 20. He is Col. Harold B. Simpson, career army man, author and researcher on Civil War subjects, founder of four Civil War Round Tables and a museum, and a native Illinoian. He will speak on "Jefferson Davis and the United States Camel Corps."



Col. Harold Simpson

Davis was secretary of war for President Franklin Pierce and in 1855 was instrumental in persuading Congress to vote \$30,000 to import camels for transporting supplies and troops in the southwest. Two expeditions bought camels in the middle east, in 1856 and 1857. The animals were landed at Indianola, Texas.

From the camel corral at Camp Verde, near San Antonio, a combined train of camels and mules went overland to southern California in the summer of 1857. The trek proved the camel superior to the mule as a beast of burden across dry, barren land. A few of the "ships of the desert" were left near Los Angeles and the rest returned to Camp Verde.

John B. Floyd, secretary of war under Buchanan, lacked Davis' interest in camels and, refused to augment the herd or employ them for logistical purposes on the frontier. Upon the outbreak of the Civil War the herd was dispersed. The Confederates got most, 80 camels and two Egyptian drivers. Camels turned out to graze were killed by Indians or wandered to West Texas where they turned up years later.

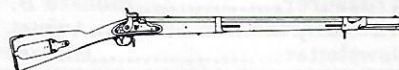
Several, however, had other uses. Gen. Sterling Price used one huge beast to carry his headquarters baggage. Another carried mail in Texas. A few packed cotton bales to Brownsville. One was broken to the plow.

Simpson will relate the bizarre aspects of the experiment — the peculiar physical makeup and habits of the camels, their feats of strength in Texas, and results.

Simpson was born at Hindsboro, Ill., has a master's degree from University of Illinois, has attended Harvard, Alabama, and George Washington, and is working on his doctorate at Texas Christian in Fort Worth. His parents live in Oak Park, Ill.

His army career began with R.O.T.C. at Illinois. He became a lieutenant in cavalry in 1940 and transferred to the air force in 1941. He spent 31 months in the southwest Pacific in World War II. He attended many military staff schools and had many assignments, retiring as a colonel in 1963 after 23 years of service. Since then he has been teaching in colleges.

At Wiesbaden, Germany, air force headquarters in 1955, he organized a Civil War Round Table with military personnel and Germans as members. As many as 150 attended monthly dinner meetings. He organized



259th REGULAR MEETING

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Col. Harold B. Simpson (ret.)

on

"Jefferson Davis and the  
United States Camel Corps"

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MONDAY, MARCH 20, 1967

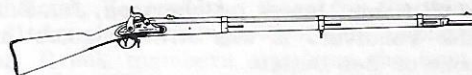
Furniture Club in Furniture Mart

Cocktails at 5:30

666 North Lake Shore Drive

Dinner at 6:30 p.m.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (trustees, officers, past presidents) meets at 4:45 p.m. in Furniture Club.



THE INDIANA House of Representatives passed a bill to provide funds for an Indiana memorial at the Gettysburg National Military park. The measure would authorize the expenditure of \$20,000 to acquire a site and erect a monument to the Indiana troops who died in the battle.

CWRTs at Montgomery, Ala., in 1959 (while at the Air War College), at Waco, Texas, in 1960, and at Hill Junior College, Hillsboro, Texas, in 1963. Now he is working to form one in Fort Worth.

He organized the Confederate Research Center of Hill Junior College, a press which publishes two titles a year, a gun museum, and a Round Table — all unique for a junior college.

In publishing, Simpson has written or edited, "Brawling Brass—North & South," "Gaines' Mill to Appomattox" (Hood's Texas Brigade), "First Texas Infantry Brigade," "Touched with Valor" (papers of Gen. Jerome B. Robertson), "The Bugle Softly Blows" (diary of Ben Seaton), "Texas in the War, 1861-1865" (by Gen. Marcus Wright), "Fort Mason, Texas," and "Robert E. Lee by Jefferson Davis."



# THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE



FOUNDED DECEMBER 3, 1940

18 East Chestnut Street,  
Chicago 11, Illinois  
Phone: Whitehall 4-3085

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## HONORS TO RALPH AND PETE

Two leading Round Tables have chosen two of our members for their highest honors.

On February 28, the Civil War Round Table of Kansas City made the eighth presentation of its Harry S Truman award "for meritorious service in the field of Civil War History" to Ralph G. Newman. Previous winners were Bruce Catton, Allan Nevins, Edwin C. Bearss, T. Harry Williams, James I. Robertson, Jr., E. B. Long, and Frank Vandiver. It was K.C.'s ladies' night and Ralph spoke on Ben Butler.

E. B. (Pete) Long will receive the District of Columbia Round Table's Gold Medal Award for 1967 at the group's annual dinner in April. The citation for Pete recognizes his research work for Bruce Catton's Centennial History of the Civil War, the research notes which were presented to the Library of Congress and are now available to other Civil War scholars, for his writings and speaking, and missionary work for the Civil War Round Tables. Catton will be speaker at the dinner.

THE 100th REGULAR MEETING of Springfield, Ill., CWRT was held Feb. 17. The meeting was a memorial to Charles Trimble, a founder of the CWRT who died recently. Springfield CWRT now is holding its meetings in the Illinois State Museum auditorium.

James W. Moody, a native of Oak Park, Ill., has been named executive director of the Virginia Historic Landmarks commission, an arm of the executive department of the state government at Richmond. Moody was executive secretary of the Tennessee Historical commission, residing at Belle Meade, the famed place near Nashville.

from the  
Editor's pen



Alice Cromie welcomed as speaker, (left to right) Ver Lynn Sprague, Arthur Bergquist, Mel Brisk, Mrs. Cromie, Al Meyer, Mike Lerner and Pete Long.

An attendance of 142 members and guests complimented Alice Hamilton Cromie as the first regularly scheduled woman speaker at a regular meeting at Ladies' Night, February 14 at the Ivanhoe restaurant.

Mrs. Cromie responded with a delightful talk on her experiences in compiling "A Tour Guide of the Civil War." This touched on helpers in her gathering of material and the serendipity (desirable discoveries by accident) of the project.

She quoted from some columns written by her husband, Robert, when he chauffeured her on tours of battlefields. And about the competition for book space in their house where she is a collector of Civil War tomes and Bob goes for everything on the history of golf. At this point, Bob, Books Editor of the Chicago Tribune, broke in with a bit of kibitzing.

Alice spoke of diaries and letters she had come across in her researches and gave a few of the details that had fascinated her. Her fact-packed talk was spiced with humor. The crowd was larger than planned for and overflowed the dining room. Those who ate in another room came into the meeting room for the speaking.

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President Michael S. Lerner greeted Mrs. Cromie with a concocted telegram from George (Bugs) Moran, who didn't attend the St. Valentine's day massacre about four decades ago. Balladeer Win Stracke introduced her with her favorite song "Lorena."

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After the dinner and speaking program, the party moved into the new Ivanhoe theater and saw the play, "Jane." Joan Bennett and a fine cast gave good entertainment in the light-hearted play.

DR. HOWARD MONNETT, expert on the Battle of Westport and editor of the newsletter of the Kansas City CWRT, writes this of the man who will help him guide our battlefield tour in the Kansas City area:

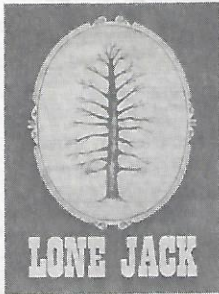
"L. E. (Shorty) Seymour: This spring the Chicago Civil War Round Table will make its battlefield tour to Pea Ridge, Wilson's Creek and Westport. It will be highly successful, but some of that success will be due to Shorty Seymour. For the past several weeks he has been aiding Pete Long in gathering materials and making preparations for our Chicago visitors. Shorty gives unstintingly of his time and, believe me, when he undertakes a job, he gets it done! Our Round Table, owes Shorty more than most of us realize. He is our best booster, member-getter, gladhander, and hard worker. We just couldn't get along without him."



## ACTION AT LONE JACK

(Another in Battlefield Tour series)

Missourians staged their own private Civil War battle Aug. 16, 1862, southeast of Kansas City at the hamlet of Lone Jack. It was typical of the 1,162 clashes of arms in Missouri—civil war in the traditional conception of neighbor versus neighbor.



Today a handsome, modern museum relates the tragic story of Lone Jack and Jackson county. Nearby are the streets of the sleepy community and the silent, tiny cemetery. A superhighway rushes by.

A Confederate force under overall command of Col. Jeremiah Vardaman Cockrell had attacked and captured Independence on Aug. 11, but Federal troops were now after the Missouri raiders. Union Maj. Emory S. Foster had some 800 Missourians and two guns of the 3rd Indiana battery at Lone Jack.

In the early dawn of Aug. 16 Cockrell's perhaps 1,100 Confederate Missourians struck fiercely, with complete surprise. The squirrel rifles and shotguns of the Sothrons were in action. As daylight came, the Confederates charged over back fences toward the Union field pieces.

The confused Federals set up a crude defense with sharpshooters in the hotel. Two Confederates managed to set fire to the hostelry. The struggle was hand-to-hand in the village street. The guns were captured and recaptured several times. Sabers and musket butts were used to advantage by both sides.

Finally, 60 of Foster's men charged once more and retook the guns. The Confederates fell back, only to be reinforced by some of Quantrill's men.

With numbers favoring the Southerners, the Federals retreated, leaving the two blood-spattered guns. The five-hour "action" was over. The casualties were heavy, and Maj. Foster was "dangerously" wounded. The figures are uncertain, but the dead alone were said to total as many as 200. Many of the casualties were from Lone Jack or the surrounding area. The dead of both sides were buried under the huge jack oak tree for which the community was named. The tree died shortly thereafter, but monuments in the modest cemetery tell the story.

Lone Jack decided little, but proved that Civil War in Missouri held its own inner bitterness, no matter how few were involved. Emotions ran deeply, so deeply that more than a century later their memory has not been completely erased.

E. B. Long

WILBUR G. KURTZ, SR., "grand old man" of Atlanta, died Feb. 18 at age 85. A native of Oakland, Ill., he grew up in Greencastle, Ind., and when money was available attended Chicago Art Institute. As a newspaperman, he covered a veterans convention in Atlanta and stayed on. He married Annie Laurie Fuller, daughter of the man who was conductor of the train pulled by The General, the engine stolen by the Andrews raiders. Mr. Kurtz became an expert on that story and was adviser to the late Walt Disney in making the movie, "The Great Locomotive Chase." He was a friend and adviser to Margaret Mitchell in the writing of "Gone With the Wind" and was adviser in making of the movie. He was foremost in having the "Battle of Atlanta" cyclorama and the locomotive Texas installed in a special building in Atlanta park. Mr. Kurtz was expert in Atlanta, Georgia, and Civil War history. He was our companion and lecturer on battlefield tours to Atlanta. On our 1965 tour, his works were honored with the award of our Distinguished Service certificate.

## TO THE LADIES —

Eleanor (Mrs. Wilson) Smith will speak to the Camp Followers on March 20 at 18 East Chestnut street. She may well lay claim to having had more forebearers in the Civil War than any other Round Table wife. Two great-grandfathers and seven great uncles served the Union, mostly in Iowa regiments. Eleanor will share with the ladies a collection of cherished letters which were written to her great grandmother, "Dear Adeline," and which tell of soldier life as it was seen in the western theater of war by her great-grandfather, who was killed at Corinth. Eleanor has written and presented her own program on WGN, and has done fashion, advertising, and publicity work. Call Lenore (Mrs. George) Fleming, 928-8977 for reservations for the supper meeting.

--Barbara Long, program chairman

Stanley F. Horn of Nashville, Tenn., will be the March 15 speaker at New Orleans CWRT.

COL. J. GAY SEABOURNE, guide and speaker on our battlefield tour to the Washington area last May, received the 13th annual Lincoln Bronze Plaque award of the Lincoln-Civil War Society of Philadelphia on February 11 and addressed the society on "The Religion of Abraham Lincoln." Official Records, the newsletter of the Philadelphia group called Col. Seabourne "that gentleman who has so frequently opened his heart and mind, who has so frequently donated his time to many Civil War Round Tables."

ELMER BRINKMAN, chairman of our CWRT Speakers Bureau, reports that speaking engagements were arranged for Joseph Eisendrath at the Kiwanis Club of Lincoln Park on Feb. 8 and Dr. G. P. Clausius with the Sons of Union Veterans on Feb. 12. Miner Coburn will speak to Salt Creek CWRT March 17 on "The Monitor and the Merrimack." Elmer Gertz was the Feb. 17 speaker. Student Glen Wiche, who attends most of our meetings and goes on battlefield tours, had a share in the January Salt Creek program. J. Ambler Johnston of Richmond, Va., will be there for the April meeting and will be the house guest of Dan Lapinski. Most of the Salt Creek members are from the west suburban area and meetings are in the Glen Ellyn public library. Brinkman has had inquiries from Josh Billings of Washington and Guy Di Carlo of Cleveland about setting up speakers bureaus in their areas.

CLYDE C. WALTON, member and several times panelist and speaker, has resigned as Illinois state historian, effective June 30, and will become director of libraries at Northern Illinois University, DeKalb. Clyde is a Chicago native and earned his master's degree in library science at the University of Chicago. Starting at the University of Iowa in 1950 he was curator of rare books, university archivist, and head of the reference department. On our battlefield tour to Richmond in 1953 he outlined the plan for the quarterly, CIVIL WAR HISTORY. Our CWRT pledged support and for a number of years included a subscription to the periodical in membership dues. Clyde founded the magazine for University of Iowa and edited it until he went to Springfield, Ill., in 1956. Besides being state historian, he was head of the Historical library and executive director of the state historical society. He was secretary of the state Civil War Centennial commission. Clyde is working on a book to be titled, "Mr. Lincoln Opens His Mail."



## THE NEW BOOKS



**GRENVILLE M. DODGE**, by Stanley P. Hirshson (Indiana, 334pp, \$10). "Grant's General" who knew Presidents from Lincoln to Wilson, Iowa representative in Congress, railroad builder, Indian fighter, supporter of Negro rights.

**ABRAHAM LINCOLN: A History**, by John G. Nicolay and John Hay, abridged and edited by Paul M. Angle (U. of Chicago, 394pp, \$8.50, paper \$3.45).

**PRE-CIVIL WAR REFORM: The Variety of Principles and Programs**, by Lorman Ratner (Prentice-Hall, 128pp, \$4.50). Study of Garrison, Parker, Beecher, Dow, and Weld.

**ROLE OF STATE LEGISLATURES IN THE CONFEDERACY**, by May Spencer Ringold (U. of Georgia, 148pp, \$5).

**SOUTH AS IT IS, 1865-66**, by John Richard Dennett (Viking-Compass, 384pp, paper \$1.85). Originally a series of articles in *The Nation* — travel in seven states.

**THE CIVIL WAR AND READJUSTMENT IN KENTUCKY**, by Ellis Merton Coulter (Peter Smith, 480pp, \$6).

**THE AGE OF CIVIL WAR AND RECONSTRUCTION, 1830-1900**, by Charles Robert Crowe (Dorsey Press, Homewood, Ill., 479pp, \$6.60).

**THE MESSAGES AND PAPERS OF JEFFERSON DAVIS AND THE CONFEDERACY** (Bowker, new edition, 2 Vols., \$28.50).

**THE CIVIL WAR IN MAURY COUNTY, TENNESSEE**, by Jill Knight Garrett and M. P. Lightfoot (Mount Pleasant, Tenn., 265pp, \$5.50).

**THE DEFEAT OF JOHN HAWKINS**, by Rayner Unwin (Macmillan, 319pp, \$4). The story of one of the earliest slave importers.

**DESERTION DURING THE CIVIL WAR**, by Ella Lonn (Peter Smith, 215pp, \$5). Reprint.

**STORIES OF DIXIE**, by James William Nicholson (Claitor, 247pp, \$3). Revised edition.

**TURNING POINTS OF THE CIVIL WAR**, by James A. Rawley (Nebraska, 230pp, \$5.75).

**THE YELLOWLEGS: The Story of the United States Cavalry**, by Richard Wormser (Doubleday, \$6.50).

### BOOK NOTES

Virginia Medical Monthly, January, 1967, has an article, "The Medical History of Jefferson Davis," by Frederick W. Gray and Dr. Chester D. Bradley. Dr. Bradley, who sponsored the restoration of the Jefferson Davis Casemate at Fort Monroe as a museum, had reprints of the article made for the museum.

John Y. Simon's newsletter of the Ulysses S. Grant Association (Vol. IV, No. 2, January, 1967) has an extensive treatment of Grant's battle action at San Cosme in the Mexican war.

A personal record of Sibley's invasion of the southwest, written by a colonel who participated on a high level in the decisions and events, has been edited by Alwyn Barr and printed in a limited edition (\$7.50) titled, "Charles Porter's Account of the Confederate Attempt to Seize Arizona and New Mexico."

Herbert Kaub is writing a history of the 10 years of the Civil War Round Table of Colorado.

Senators Stuart Symington and Edward V. Long and Congressman Durward G. Hall have asked Congress to increase to 3 million dollars authorization of funds for development of Wilson's Creek National Battlefield park.

## BULLETIN BOARD



### FUTURE MEETINGS —

April 20-23 — 17th Annual Battlefield Tour to Wilson's Creek, Pea Ridge, Prairie Grove, Lone Jack, Kansas City, Westport, Independence, and Lexington, Mo.

Wednesday, April 26 — Fred Benton, Jr., "The Battle and Siege of Port Hudson."

Tuesday, May 25 — Henry Simmons, "Northern Censorship of the Press: Necessary or Needless?"

Friday, June 23 — J. Robert Smith, "Gen. Mike Lawler."

### SPECIAL EVENTS

Friday to Sunday, May 19-21, Spring Tour of Illinois State Historical Society at Monticello, Ill.

Note: Dates of ISHS fall tour and annual meeting have been changed to Sept. 29, 30 and Oct. 1 at Benton, Ill.

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**NEW MEMBERS:** LeRoy H. Fischer, Department of History, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Okla. 74074; Peter Gelderman, 896 Tower Rd., Winnetka, Ill. 60093; Wendell Smith, 7254 Eberhart Ave., Chicago, Ill. 60619.

**AVAILABLE** at meetings: Lapel pin, \$2; Key Chain with CWRT emblem, 50¢; Cloth patch of emblem, 50¢.



Edmund C. Gass, who was assistant director of the National Civil War Centennial Commission, died December 31, 1966.

**THE BENJAMIN BARONDESS AWARD**, for an outstanding contribution to the Field of Lincolniana, was presented by New York CWRT to Kenneth A. Bernard for his book "Lincoln and the Music of the Civil War." The award was \$100 and a copy of the Leonard Volk bust of Lincoln with a bronze inscription. Bernard is professor of history at Boston University and president of the Lincoln Group of Boston.

**MICHIGAN REGIMENTAL ROUND TABLE**, P.O. Box 44, Southfield, Mich., 48075, has been running along merrily, little known to the mainstream of CWRTs. A brief history by Secretary Abbott M. Gibney states that the group is headquartered in Birmingham, a suburb north of Detroit. Meetings are in the Congregational Church the last Friday of each month, September through June. There are 35 members, some of whom belong to the reactivated Loomis Battery. Gibney wishes to exchange newsletters with others.

In 1865, the Abraham Lincoln Memorial association published the following as the ages of enlisting soldiers in the Union army: 25 boys at 10 years of age, 38 at 11, 225 at 12, 300 at 13, 105,000 at 14 and 15, 126,000 at 16, 613,000 at 17, 307,000 at 18, 1,009,000 between 18 and 21, and 118,000 men over 21. Most of the boys of 16 and under were enlisted as musicians, but many of them soon began to handle a gun. Regimental muster rolls show that out of two million men, three-fourths were native Americans, 175,000 were German, 150,000 Irish, 50,000 English, 50,000 British America, and 75,000 other countries.