

THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

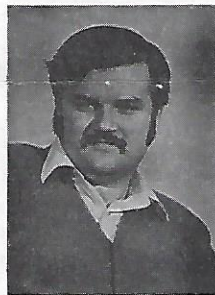
Volume XXXV, Number 5

Chicago, Illinois

January, 1975

WILLIAM C. DAVIS ON THE BATTLE OF NEW MARKET

Our speaker on January 10, 1975 will be William C. "Jack" Davis, Editorial and Managing Director of Historical Times, Inc., the company that is responsible for Civil War Times Illustrated and other excellent publications. As his topic he has selected the romanticized, but militarily important, Battle of New Market. This engagement, considered by many the most vital secondary engagement of the war in Virginia, is also subject of Jack's latest book, which will be published by Doubleday in June of 1975



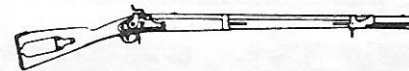
William C. Davis

In the spring of 1864, as part of U.S. Grant's multi-pronged offensive against the Confederacy, a federal army of approximately 9,000 troops moved up the Shenandoah Valley under the command of Maj. Gen. Franz Sigel. Its opposition consisted of a small 5,000 man Southern force led by the former Vice-President of the United States, John C. Breckinridge. At stake was not only the rich grain and livestock resources of the Valley, but also the safety of the Army of Northern Virginia which was facing Grant in the Wilderness. The defeat of Breckinridge would provide Sigel with a ready avenue eastward across the Blue Ridge toward Lee's unprotected left flank.

As he marched south, the incompetent Sigel was harrassed by the effective tactics of Confederate guerillas ably led by Mosby, Imboden, and McNeill. Thus, as a result of its losses and the necessity of detachments, the Union force was reduced to about 6,000 men by the time it reached New Market. However, Breckinridge, too, had suffered from cavalry raiders, having had to send a portion of his command against an expedition led from West Virginia by Crook and Averell. To partially offset this reduction in strength, the Confederate force had been supplemented by the addition of 247 cadets from the Virginia Military Institute.

On the morning of May 15, 1864, the Southerners attacked. As the battle raged, the ineptness of Sigel as a military commander manifested itself. Despite an overall superiority in numbers, he was never able to bring all his troops into action at once. Thus, at each point of combat on the field that day, the Confederates were never outnumbered. After a final decisive Southern charge, Sigel ordered a withdrawal to Strasburg, where, four days later, he was relieved.

In addition to describing the strategy and tactics of the campaign and battle, our speaker plans to delve into the personalities involved, the true role of the V.M.I cadets, and the battle's impact on the course of the War. Probably no man is better qualified to do that than Jack Davis, truly one of the brightest of the young stars on the horizon of Civil War study. His numerous achievements belie the fact that he has just passed his twenty-eighth birthday. Born in Kansas City, Jack



337th REGULAR MEETING

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William C. "Jack" Davis
on
The Battle of New Market

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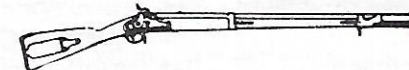
Friday, January 10, 1975

* * *

Chicago Bar Association
29 South LaSalle Street

Cocktails at 5:30 p.m.

Dinner at 6:30 p.m.



Just prior to the January meeting, there will be a meeting of the Executive Committee at 5:00 P.M. at the Bar Association. All current officers, trustees and committee chairmen, as well as past presidents are urged to attend.

received both his B.A. (1968) and M.A. (1969) from California State College at Sonoma. Having spent his summers working for Bob Fowler at CWTI, in 1969 Jack declined an invitation to pursue doctoral studies at the University of Chicago to become an assistant to the managing editor of the magazine. Rising rapidly through the ranks, he became editor of CWTI in 1972 and in 1974 assumed his present duties. His responsibilities now also include "American History Illustrated" and "British History Illustrated."

Despite his ever-increasing workload as an editor, Jack has also been able to add to his own literary accomplishments. In addition to the dozens of articles he has authored for his own publications and American Heritage, his lively monthly column, "Behind The Lines," remains a highlight of CWTI. His first book, "Breckinridge: Statesman, Soldier, Symbol," published in 1974 by L.S.U. Press, received an Andrew Mellon Foundation Grant and the Jules F. Landry Award. A third book, as yet untitled, on the Monitor and the Virginia is now being completed for issuance a year from now.

Yet, with all the honors that have deservedly come his way,
(Continued on page 4)

THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE



FOUNDED DECEMBER 3, 1940

18 East Chestnut Street
Chicago, Illinois 60611
Phone: Whitehall 4-3085

OFFICERS

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COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN

Battlefield Tour	Brooks Davis, Terry Carr, Robert Walter
Membership and Hospitality	Donald E. Jensen
Fellowship	Arnold Alexander, Lloyd Miller
House Committee	Ray Jankovich and Irwin Levin

The only requirement for membership is a genuine interest in the Civil War and its era. For information, address Donald E. Jensen, 335 East Woodland Road, Lake Bluff, Ill. 60044.



from the Editor's pen



A controversy that is almost as old as the Round Table itself has once again raised its head. On December 17, 1974 a lady from a northern suburb telephoned Wally Phillips, Chicago's most popular early morning radio personality, to protest that, despite her interest in the Civil War, she could not gain admission to the Round Table for it has a men-only membership policy. While normally, in our quest to attract new members, we would welcome media publicity, visions of N.O.W. and Gloria Steinem picketing the Abraham Lincoln Book Shop make us fervently wish that Phillips' line had been busy. One comforting thought is that at least we will not have to bear witness to a Civil War bra-burning ceremony, as the memoirs of Judson Kilpatrick and Earl Van Dorn inform us that that item of feminine apparel was not in use during the days of Belle Boyd and Pauline Cushman.

It would be very easy to dismiss the subject of women members with a few flippant remarks. For example, we could foresee forthcoming meetings featuring fascinating talks on, "The Love Life of Mother Bickerdyke" or "How Mrs. Lincoln Planned a Theater Party." But such cavalier treatment is not fair to either the ladies or to the issue itself. The question is a serious one which affects the future of the Round Table. It has already been discussed during prior Executive Committee meetings and when it is brought up again, as it will be, we urge the members of the committee to make no snap decisions. One or two eloquent speakers and the atmosphere of the moment should not be allowed to swing the pendulum one way or the other. Perhaps the best solution would be for an investigative study to be made by a sub-committee prior to a final determination that would decide the issue once and for all.

For the record, and because we feel fence-straddling will resolve nothing, it is the attitude of this column that the Round Table should not permit women members. After sincere reflection, we must conclude that to admit the ladies would, despite all good intentions, inevitably lead to an erosion of the purpose of this organization. With all due respect to those few serious female students of the Civil War, the undeniable truth is that most women could care less about the Battle of Antietam or Jackson's strategy in the Valley. The old argument that those ladies who are in the latter group would not come to meetings just doesn't hold water. They would come, regardless of the topic, if only to spend an evening out with their husband, boy friend, lover, or whatever. Soon the members themselves would, out of concern for the ladies' pleasure, reluctantly request meetings which would be more entertaining to the women. It is very easy now to say we will not change our format. Will it be so easy then?

To illustrate our position, perhaps we can best point to our own Battlefield Tour, which now does welcome female participants. As each year passes, the tour chairmen are more and more obligated to "plan something for the women." Each year less and less time is actually spent on the battlefield with a corresponding increase in the number of hours passed blissfully in the cozy confines of the gift shops and ante-bellum homes. And even while we are on the battlefield, the evidence is there. As we stop and emerge from the buses to examine Bloody Pond or Little Round Top, the great majority of ladies remain aboard to continue their needlepoint, gossip, or pursue the consumption of diet pop in unheard-of quantities. Can these be the same women who would enjoy, without seeking change, evenings spent at the Bar Association hearing talks on battle tactics?

Well, that is our attitude, but like the T.V. stations, we will certainly afford an opportunity to anyone to either present the other side or to support our views. If you wish to do so, write your thoughts down and send them to us for inclusion in a future issue.



Past president Dr. Gerhard P. Clausius, of Belvidere, spoke before The Round Tables of Milwaukee on November 20th and Kansas City on November 26th. His topic was Belvidere's other favorite son, General Stephen A. Hurlbut. However, as on several past occasions, Doc refused to confirm or deny the widely circulated rumor that Hurlbut was Alexander Schimmelfennig's illegitimate son.

Our past quizmaster, Miner Coburn, has been kept quite busy despite being retired. Recently elected a director of the Wilmette Historical Society, he will be speaking to the Singles Club on February 9 on "Mr. Lincoln and the Women in his Life." On February 18, he will be addressing the Seventh District Meeting of the American Legion on the "History of the Grand Army of the Republic."

DECEMBER MEETING

The holiday season got off to a most pleasurable beginning for those who participated in the activities of the Round Table on December 13. The Shelby Foote double-header began at the Abraham Lincoln Book Shop with an autographing and cocktail party in honor of Mr. Foote's recently published book, the third volume of his narrative trilogy on the Civil War. From there, the men went on to their more familiar haunts at the Bar Association where eighty-six members and guests gathered for dinner, the meeting, and Mr. Foote's remarks. Just prior to Shelby's address, a report was given by Bob Franke on the progress of the Research Center Fund and a short book auction was held with its proceeds going to the Fund.

In his brief opening remarks, Shelby discussed, "Writing Civil War History." Defending his theory that a novelist can write valid historical works as well, or better, than the professional historian, he pointed out that even in their own fields the novelist and the historian are each seeking the same goal, truth. In fact, the novelist has a distinct advantage in that he has already developed style, without which even the best researched book will fail to sustain the interest of its readers. An effective historian is one who has mastered the novelist's art of dramatic composition.

At this point Shelby threw the meeting open for questions from the floor on any Civil War subject. To the delight of all, as the audience fired their inquiries the evening was transformed into what can best be described as almost a private conversation with one of the most noted Civil War authors of our time. Over an hour later, President Smidl was finally forced to call a halt, solely due to the lateness of the hour and not as a result of any waning of interest. In the following paragraphs, we shall try to recreate a sample of Shelby's answers and opinions as he set them before us.

During his twenty years of research and work on the trilogy, the area of greatest reconstruction in his preconceived thinking took place with regard to his opinions of the individuals involved in the war. The common stereotypes he had shared on such subjects as Bragg, political generals, Lee, Lincoln, Davis, etc. gave way before such realizations as that some of Bragg's ideas were valid, Banks was an honest and sometimes competent officer, and Lee's performance at Gettysburg was dreadful. Shelby related that to him the most fascinating character is Lincoln, who at times can be described as pragmatic, slippery, or a scoundrel until one analyzes and appreciates the reasons behind his actions. For example, while Davis would never break his word regardless of the consequences, Lincoln would, and often did, if it were for the nation's good or if there had been a change in circumstances. As to Davis, himself, the role of scapegoat the South has given him has clouded his true nature as a warm, sincere man. Shelby felt that one of the greatest rewards he derived from the trilogy was a better understanding of the Confederate president.

Queried on various other Civil War personalities, Shelby felt that he could say very little of a complimentary nature about Gideon Pillow; Stuart didn't become a great cavalryman until after Gettysburg when he learned he could best serve Lee by performing the traditional cavalry role; Grant's treatment of Thomas was unfair, but was honestly based upon the erroneous opinions of others Grant trusted; and one of the two true geniuses (the other was Lincoln) produced by the war was Forrest. As to his own feelings, Shelby stated that he found himself with an intense personal dislike, unrelated to military ability, for Joe Johnston and Phil Sheridan.

On literary matters, he described his own writing schedule as extremely slow. In fact, he uses a dip pen to keep himself from hurrying. However, this procedure eliminates the need for rewriting. His method of research was to first read the big books (Freeman, Sandburg, etc.) enabling him to "plot" out the war. Then he explored each specific event. He found regimental histories and memoirs to be very helpful but the writer

TO THE CAMPFOLLOWERS (LADIES)

In December, following Shelby Foote's autographing and cocktail party at the Book Shop, a terrific turnout of approximately 25 Campfollowers adjourned to the lovely apartment of Betsy Davis where a delicious catered dinner was served. Good wine, good food, and good conversation is an apt description of the evening, topped off with holiday singing accompanied by Lenore Fleming on guitar.

Next month our speaker will be Dr. Gerhard Clausius, and his subject will be Mary Lincoln. For many years Dr. Clausius has made a special study of Mr. Lincoln's wife, so if an interesting, informative evening out is what you like, be sure to attend our January meeting. The place will be the Book and Bottle, the date January 10, 1975, and the time 5:30 P.M.

For reservations write or call Mary Ellen Wehler, 244 So. Elmwood, Aurora, Illinois 60506, phone 896-0169.



WANTED: Any information on General John A. Logan, especially his letters or soldiers' reminiscences. Contact George J. Fleming, 11225 S. King Drive, Chicago, Illinois 60628.

AVAILABLE: Various back issues of "Civil War Times Illustrated." Will give to anyone who will pick them up. Contact Edward C. Johnson, 813 W. Diversey Parkway, Chicago, Illinois 60614.

WANTED: Any information pertaining to the battles for Fort Fisher, Wilmington, North Carolina; blockade running at that port; or Col. William Lamb and Gen. W.H.C. Whiting. Contact Donald Hatch, 432 Westmoreland, Apt. 14, Vernon Hills, Illinois 60060.

FOR SALE: Copy of reprint edition of "Destruction and Reconstruction" by Gen. Richard Taylor, \$9.00. Contact Charles D. Wesselhoeft, 624 Prospect Avenue, Lake Bluff, Illinois 60044.

WANTED: Any information pertaining to Gen. John Murray Corse, the hero of Allatoona. Contact Robert D. Dawson, 327 Judge Avenue, Waukegan, Illinois 60085.



must be very cautious in using them. Although the Gettysburg chapter took a year to complete, the toughest job was Shiloh because he had already written about it. All of his unused research notes have been destroyed.

Shelby considers Freeman's greatest talent to have been the ability to simplify for the reader a confusing battle, without falsifying it, such as his treatment of Seven Pines. He still thinks there is a need for definitive biographies of several prominent generals, such as Hill and Hood. While current events had no effect on his writing per se, it did give him a much greater insight into why the characters of 1861-1865 acted the way they did. Also, he sees many parallels between then and now; for example, the Grant Administration and Watergate. Shelby described a good book as one in which the author takes the reader along in a search for truth. When the writer knows the truth, he loses interest in his work and so does the reader.

Finally, in discussing his own future plans, Shelby feels that, after twenty years, he must leave the Civil War field or he will become a prisoner of it. Thus, he will be returning to the career of a novelist, writing stories with modern settings. If he follows this course he has put before himself, we will miss him, but we thank him from the bottom of our hearts. Shelby Foote leaves the study of the Civil War far, far richer than it was when he found it.

THE NEW BOOKS



(Compiled by Dick Clark)

Adams, Nehemiah. *A South-side View of Slavery; Three Months at the South.* Savannah; Beehive Press [1974]. \$10.00. Reprint

Allan, William. *History of the Campaign of Gen. T.J. (Stonewall) Jackson in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia.* . . .

Dayton, Ohio : Morningside Bookshop [1974]. \$15.00. Reprint.

Berlin, Ira. *Slaves without Masters: The Free Negro in the Antebellum South.* New York: Pantheon Books [1974]. \$12.95

Chamberlain, Joshua Lawrence. *The Passing of the Armies.* An account of the final campaign of the Army of the Potomac, based upon personal reminiscences of the Fifth Army Corps. Dayton, Ohio : Morningside Bookshop [1974]. \$17.50. Reprint.

Foote, Shelby. *The Civil War: A Narrative.* Vol. III. Red River to Appomattox. New York: Random House [1974]. \$20.00

Frassanito, William A. *Gettysburg: A Journey in Time.* New York: Scribner [1974]. \$10.00

Grossman, Julian. *The Echo of a Distant Drum: Winslow Homer and the Civil War.* New York: Harry N. Abrams [1974]. \$25.00

Killion, Ronald and Charles Waller, editors. *Slavery Time when I Was Chillun down on Marster's Plantation.* Interviews with Georgia Slaves. Savannah, Georgia: The Beehive Press [x1973]. \$9.00. Handsomely produced.

Korngold, Ralph. *Thaddeus Stevens: A Being Darkly Wise and Rudely Great.* Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press [1974]. Reprint of the 1955 printing. \$20.50

Lumpkin, Katharine Du Pre. *The Emancipation of Angelina Grimke.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press [1974]. \$11.95

Parsons, Charles Grandison. *An Inside View of Slavery; A Tour among the Planters.* Savannah, Georgia: Beehive Press [1974]. \$10.00. Reprint

Sherman, William T. "War is Hell!" *William T. Sherman's Personal Narrative of his March through Georgia.* Edited by Mills Lane. Savannah, Georgia: The Beehive Press [c1974]. \$20.00

Smith, Gustavus W. *The Battle of Seven Pines.* Dayton, Ohio : Morningside Bookshop [1974]. \$15.00. Reprint of the 1891 printing.

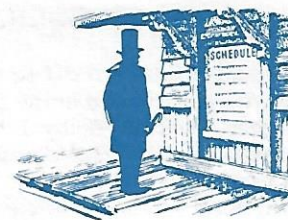
Whitridge, Arnold. *No Compromise! The Story of the Fanatics who Paved the Way to the Civil War.* Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press [1974]. Reprint of the 1960 edition. \$10.75



(Continued from Page 1)

Jack Davis readily admits that one of his proudest moments came in Gettysburg in 1973 when he was privileged to participate in the impressive ceremonies conducted by the Round Table honoring the invincible Alexander Schimmelfennig. Jack's brilliant contribution on that occasion gives us good cause to anticipate a most interesting evening on January 10.

Dick Blake, who recently moved to Springfield, presented his brilliant performance "A Look at Lincoln" in Lake Forest on November 3rd, Decatur on November 17th, and Wilmette on November 23rd. In addition, he starred in WTTW's presentation of "The Selling of A. Lincoln" which was telecast on November 29th. The program depicted how the campaign would be handled if Lincoln ran for president in 1976.



BULLETIN BOARD

FUTURE MEETINGS

Regular meetings are held at the Chicago Bar Association, 29 South LaSalle, second Friday in each month except as noted.

January 10: William C. "Jack" Davis on "The Battle of New Market." Executive Committee Meeting at 5:00 p.m.

February 14: Gordon Whitney on "The Battle of Nashville."

March 14: Frank Rankin on "The Orphan Brigade."

April 11: Harold Simpson on "The Texas Brigade, Lee's Grenadier Guard."

April 30, May 1-4: Annual Battlefield Tour to Richmond.

May 9: Ralph G. Newman on "The Last Full Measure of Devotion - Abraham Lincoln's Incredible Funeral."

June 13: Ladies Night, Nevins-Freeman Award Dinner, and Installation of Officers.

Every Monday: Informal noon luncheon meetings at LaSalle Hotel Coffee Shop; all members welcome.

NEW MEMBERS

Robert B. Randall, 11659 S. Campbell Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60655

Bernard Paprocki, 2704 N. Oak Park Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60635

John A. Rupp, 1042 W. Altgeld, Chicago, Illinois 60614

Carl J. Seifert, Jr. 990 N. Lake Shore Drive, Chicago, Illinois 60617

Bruce C. Augustin, 433 Funston Avenue, Highwood, Illinois 60040

Walter F. Radley, 173 Washington Place, Hasbrouck Heights, New Jersey 07604

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

James Ruddle, 1621 Barry Lane, Glenview, Illinois 60025

Daniel Vetter, 3919 E. Camelback Road, Apt. 122, Phoenix, Arizona 85010

We wish to congratulate our Illinois neighbors, the members of the Decatur Civil War Round Table, who celebrated their 15th anniversary at their meeting on December 12th.

On October 28, 1974, President Ford signed into law the act creating the Springfield Armory National Historic Site. Thus the National Parks Service will be taking over the Massachusetts facility. An appropriation will be requested to provide for renovation of several buildings, including the 1847 Arsenal Building which now houses the Armory Museum. The museum features the world's largest small arms collection which now cannot be fully displayed due to a lack of space, a problem the renovation will cure.

The Columbia Record albums, "The Union" and "The Confederacy" featuring the music and sounds of the Civil War are once again available. These extremely well done musical presentations, with accompanying text, can be purchased for \$9.70 each plus postage by writing A.E. Fleming, Dept. 719, The J.L. Hudson Company, Detroit, Michigan 48226.