

THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

Volume XL, Number 2

Chicago, Illinois

October, 1979

ROBERT K. KRICK ON E. P. ALEXANDER, PEERLESS AND INSIGHTFUL CANNONEER

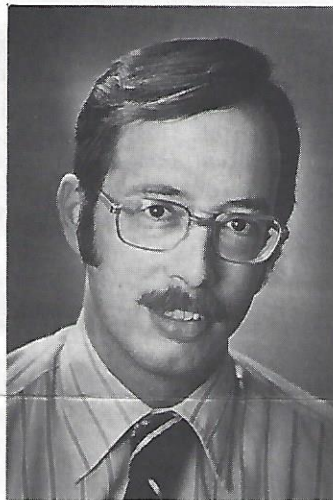
A glimpse into the unpublished recollections of Edward Porter Alexander, the Confederacy's "peerless and insightful cannoneer", awaits those who attend The Round Table meeting on October 12. Opening the pages of Alexander's diary that evening will be Robert K. Krick, chief historian for the Fredericksburg & Spotsylvania National Military Park. Those who attended the 1978 Battlefield Tour to Fredericksburg, and heard Bob speak, know they are in for an interesting and entertaining evening.

E.P. Alexander was born in Wilkes County, Georgia, in 1835. He attended the United States Military Academy and served in the "Mormon War" and in the Washington Territory before the Civil War. His renowned artillery service to the Confederacy is the more remarkable because of his youth—he was not yet 30 when he surrendered at Appomattox.

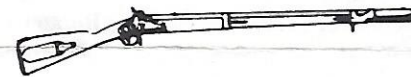
Civil War narratives are prominent among the published and unpublished post-war writings of Porter Alexander. His familiar *Military Memoirs of a Confederate* (New York, 1907) is a vade mecum for students of the campaigns of the Army of Northern Virginia. Monographs published in the *Southern Historical Society Papers* and other periodicals also contain valuable material. But, as Bob Krick will demonstrate, none of Alexander's other writings are nearly so interesting and insightful as are his personal reminiscences, based on a contemporary diary.

In his talk, Bob will focus on these unpublished recollections and will include numerous excerpts from them. Alexander's subjects range the gamut from drama and pathos to dark battlefield humor and whimsical camp occurrences. Throughout, Alexander's vivid descriptions of his own feelings when facing imminent death are intermingled with detailed accounts of episodes involving the famous Confederate generals with whom he served.

Bob Krick, who has been chief historian at Fredericksburg & Spotsylvania since 1972, is the author or editor of numerous books. These include: *Maxey Gregg, Political*



Robert K. Krick



384th REGULAR MEETING

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ROBERT K. KRICK

ON

E.P. ALEXANDER, PEERLESS
AND INSIGHTFUL CANNONEER

* * *

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 12, 1979

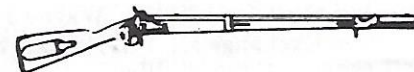
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Chicago Bar Association

29 South LaSalle Street, Chicago

Cocktails at 5:30 p.m.

Dinner at 6:30 p.m.



Extremist and Confederate General (1973); *Roster of the Confederate Dead in the Fredericksburg Confederate Cemetery* (1974); *Parker's Virginia Battery, C.S.A.* (1975); *Neale Books, An Annotated Bibliography* (1976); *Spotsylvania County Patriots, 1774-1786* (1975); and *Lee's Colonels: A Biographical Register of the Field Officers of the Army of Northern Virginia* (1979). He was the editor of a new edition of William C. Oates, *The War Between the Union and the Confederacy* in 1974 and Robert Stiles, *Four Years Under Marse Robert* in 1977. In publication is an index to the *Southern Historical Society Papers* (with five other compilers). Bob is also at work on a book on the Battle of Cedar Mountain.

Bob received his B.A. in U.S. History from Pacific Union College and an M.A. in military history from San Jose State University. He served as the Chief Historian, Fort McHenry National Monument (War of 1812) from 1967 to 1969. Then, from 1969 to 1972, he was Superintendent, Fort Necessity National Battlefield (French & Indian War). This will be his first talk to our Round Table in Chicago.

THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE



FOUNDED DECEMBER 3, 1940

18 East Chestnut Street
Chicago, Illinois 60611

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The only requirement for membership in The Round Table is a genuine interest in the Civil War and its era. For information, address Ward C. Smidl, 1104 Whippoorwill Lane, Palatine, Illinois 60067.



Treasurer Marvin Sanderman reminds all members that 1979-80 dues must be paid by November 1—persons who have not paid by that date will be dropped from the rolls. Those who are able to do so are encouraged to make an extra contribution, or even to become a sustaining member at \$50 per year. Marv also reports that there is still a supply of raffle tickets available at \$5 each. The winner will receive a free 1980 Battlefield Tour. Tickets are available by mail.

Fellow Round Table member Jim Kostohrys, who did the beautiful color portrait of General Stephen Augustus Hurlbut that was presented to Dr. G. P. Clausius at the September meeting, is available to do one of your favorite general for a very reasonable price. For further information, contact Jim: 521 Cornell, Des Plaines, Illinois 60016. 827-8196.

* * * * *

David M. Kahn, curator of the National Park Service Manhattan Sites, is seeking the views of interested individuals about the retention or elimination of the mosaic benches which surround the Grant Tomb in New York. John Simon, Executive Director of the U.S. Grant Association, and Mrs. Griffiths and Mrs. Ruestows, descendents of General Grant, are on record urging the removal of the mosaics because they are inappropriate and detract from the dignity of the Tomb. Anyone wishing to express an opinion about this matter, or about other improvements at the Tomb such as the display of better historical material about the accomplishments of Grant, should write to Mr. Kahn, 26 Wall Street, New York, New York 10005.

* * * * *

The National Park Service recently discovered a letter which Bob Krick, historian for the service in Fredericksburg, believes was the last letter from Guinea Station before Stonewall Jackson's death. It was written by a staff officer, Lt. James P. Smith, to his sister and was found in a shoebox at the home of Smith's granddaughter in Davidson, North Carolina. The letter offers a more optimistic view of Jackson's chances for survival than was generally reported in the accounts of his last days and describes the emotion at the scene.

Park Service officials had gone to see the granddaughter, Mrs. Lewis Schenck, in quest of additional information about Chatham Plantation in Stafford County, once owned by Smith's father-in-law, James Lacy. During the conversation, Mrs. Schenck produced a shoebox filled with about 40 old letters and offered them to the Park Service. The letter will be returned to the house where Jackson died and put on display.

* * * * *

The conspiracy conviction of Dr. Samuel Mudd has been overturned—at least in spirit. On July 24 President Carter declared that although he cannot undo Mudd's conviction, he thinks he was innocent of conspiracy to murder Abraham Lincoln.

Carter's statement came in a letter to Dr. Richard Mudd of Saginaw, Michigan, who has led a 60-year crusade to clear the family name and establish that his grandfather was only doing what any doctor would do when he set Booth's broken leg. Samuel Mudd, after conviction by a U.S. military court, was sentenced to life in a military stockade on the Dry Tortugas Islands of Florida. He was pardoned by President Johnson in 1869 for his work in fighting a yellow fever epidemic—but a pardon is only forgiveness, not a declaration of innocence.

In his letter, Carter wrote that, "I am advised that the findings of guilt and the sentence of the military commission that tried Dr. Mudd are binding and that there is no authority under law by which I, as President, could set aside his conviction... Nevertheless, I want to express my personal opinion that the declarations made by President Johnson in pardoning Dr. Mudd substantially discredit the validity of the military commission's judgement".

SEPTEMBER MEETING

Although the actions which took place north of the James River on September 29 and 30, 1864, known as the Battle of Chaffin's Farm, have received little attention from Civil War historians, they were nevertheless important. William Mallory told the 105 members and guests who attended The Round Table meeting on September 14 why. Had the Union army been successful, he said, Richmond could have fallen. Mallory also pointed out that both Grant and Lee considered the battle important enough to be on the scene personally.

In September, 1864, Sheridan and Early were engaged in the Shenandoah Valley. Grant, concerned that reinforcements would be sent to Early, sought to hold all of Lee's forces at Richmond. On September 27, he ordered a crossing of the James on the 29th. The Tenth and Eighteenth Corps, under David Birney and E.O.C. Ord, were to attack the Richmond defenses and move directly to the city if they broke through. At the same time Meade was to move south to make the Confederates think the objective was Petersburg. At the end of the operation, Grant wanted either Richmond or Petersburg taken, or to be in a good position to do so.

By September, 1864, the earthworks surrounding Richmond had been strengthened and enlarged to the point where they were quite formidable. However, as Bill pointed out, they were lightly manned. The southern end of the Confederate line, in the area of Chaffin's Farm, was somewhat strengthened by gunboats on the river. However, on the 29th they did not fire until Harrison was taken.

The Tenth and Eighteenth Corps crossed the river during the night of September 28 at Deep Bottom, about 12 miles below Richmond. They came upon some Confederates who were easily brushed aside, and, advancing rapidly, they took Fort Harrison, capturing 16 pieces of artillery. (Ord was wounded in the attack.) Lee ordered up reinforcements and the Confederates formed a new line between Fort Johnson and the river, and successfully repulsed repeated attacks made during the morning.

Meanwhile, the Tenth Corps was moving on Fort Gilmer up the New Market Road. The Confederates retired up the road before them, holding as best they could. As Bill explained, it was imperative that they hold since the New Market Road ran straight to Richmond. Their actions gained time for reinforcements to come up in the afternoon. The advance on Gilmer itself was slowed by ravines filled with fallen trees, as well as by artillery fire, and two attacks, the second by the colored brigade, were turned back.

On September 30 the defenders became the attackers. Union troops now occupied Fort Harrison and old Confederate works to the north. Although the Confederates made three fierce attacks in the afternoon, they were repulsed and finally pulled back. But at the end of the Battle, Bill explained, Richmond, although very vulnerable, had not been taken. This was due, he said, to the valor of the Confederate defenders who held out long enough to allow reinforcements to come up. (Meade's attack to the south also got nowhere.)

Union losses in the Battle totaled 3327 killed and wounded. (The Confederate losses are unknown, although one brigade alone lost over 300 men.) As a result of the Battle, there were 16 Medals of Honor awarded—two to white soldiers and 14 to Black soldiers. Following the Battle the Federal army strengthened the lines, rebuilt Fort Harrison (which they renamed Burnham), and built another fort to protect Burnham from the river.

The U.S.S. Monitor may one day rise again, but only in pieces. Last August, divers explored the wreckage of the Monitor to determine the feasibility of raising the ironclad. It lies in about 200 feet of water 16 miles southeast of Cape Hatteras where it went down in a storm in 1862.

According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the ravages of time, the sea and possibly of depth charges dropped by the Navy against suspected German submarines in World War II have eliminated all hope of raising the Monitor intact. However, several parts, including the turret, could be salvaged and put on display.

Meanwhile, the Army Corps of Engineers is studying the possibility of salvaging the Confederate ironclad Georgia which lies preserved in the Savannah River mud under about 30 feet of water. The Georgia is intact and even contains live and potentially dangerous shells. It was scuttled when Sherman captured Savannah in 1864. The corps wants to salvage it, not only for historical reasons but because it is a hazard to other vessels using the river.

* * * * *

Although the Civil War ended 114 years ago, two Confederate officers, Colonel John Mosby and General Jubal Early, are still causing trouble. Mosby's grandson, Beverly Coleman, succeeded in getting a resolution introduced in the Virginia Senate last spring renaming Little River Turnpike and a part of Route 50 the John S. Mosby Highway. However, residents along the Turnpike, which runs between Alexandria and Fairfax City, are opposing the plan (they feel the present name has historical significance and besides, they don't want to change their addresses). At this point it appears Coleman will probably settle for renaming a section of Route 50 after his grandfather.

And a little further north, Frederick, Maryland, is still trying to get back the \$200,000 ransom money it paid Early. Senator Charles Mathias (R. Md.) has introduced legislation in Congress to reimburse the town. Early, who was seeking to relieve some of the pressure on Lee, moved toward Washington through Frederick in July, 1864. He threatened to burn the town if they didn't pay, and town officials were forced to borrow the money. The loans took 85 years to repay. Mathias' bill is currently in the Senate Judiciary Committee, but the likelihood of its passing is slim—Mathias has introduced the same bill every year since 1961.

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The Journal and the 114th: 1861 to 1865, edited by member John Satterlee, has recently been published. It contains stories taken from the pages of *The Illinois State Journal*, most of them by a correspondent known only as "Observer" who followed the 114th throughout the War. The book, which costs \$15, is available from John, 6 Lambert Lane, Springfield, Illinois 62704.

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The Mississippi River Museum, now under construction on Mud Island off the shore of downtown Memphis, has launched a search for artifacts associated with the river. A particular goal is the acquisition of seven cannon tubes for the museum's walk-through reconstruction of a Union gunboat. There, museum visitors will hear taped recordings of the simulated voices of Union soldiers and gunfire. They will also be able to visit the "Vicksburg bluffs" to hear the war from the Confederate side. The \$32 million museum is scheduled to open in 1981. The person to contact at the museum is the coordinator, Michael Sievers, Memphis Pink Palace Museum, 3050 Central Ave., Memphis, Tenn. 38111.

THE NEW BOOKS



(Compiled by Dick Clark)

Beidelman, George Washington. *Civil War Letters of George Washington Beidelman*. Edited by Catherine H. Vanderslice. New York: Vantage Press, c1978. 212 p., bibliog. illus. \$8.95

Carter, Sidney. *Dear Bet: The Carter Letters, 1861-1863*. Edited by Bessie Mell Lane. Foreword by Horace Fraser Rudisill. Greenville, S.C., 1978. Keys Printing Co. Activities of Company A, 14th Regiment, S.C. Vols. \$12.00

Diket, A.L. *wha hae wi' [Pender] ... bled*. New York: Vantage Press, 1979. 165 p. bibliog. \$7.50

Riddle, Donald W. *Congressman Abraham Lincoln*. Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 1979. Reprint of 1857 issue from University of Illinois Press. \$21.00

Starr, Stephen Z. *The Union Cavalry in the Civil War. Volume I: From Fort Sumter to Gettysburg 1861-1863*. Maps, illus., 507 p., bibliog., index. \$29.50

Sutton, Aaron T. *Prisoner of the Rebels in Texas: The Civil War Narrative of Aaron T. Sutton, Corporal, 83rd Ohio Volunteer Infantry*. Edited by David G. Maclean. Decatur, Indiana: Americana Books, 1978. xii, 178 p., illus., index. \$12.50

ARTICLES OF INTEREST

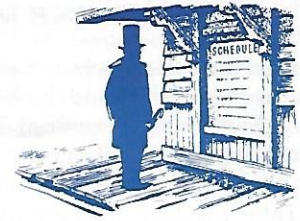
"The American Brass Band Movement" by Jon Newsom, *The Quarterly Journal of the Library of Congress*, Spring, 1979. A detailed description of the development of the brass band in mid-nineteenth century America with a lengthy account of the bands which were an integral part of many regiments throughout the Civil War. Numerous photos of Civil War bands. The issue also contains a demonstration disk with Civil War brass band music. Single copies of the issue, at \$2.25, are available from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402.

"Civil War Battlefields Are Tourism Assets" by Bill Sloat, *The South Magazine*, March, 1979. The author maintains that the "historical tragedy" of the Civil War has, years later, "generated a lucrative modern industry—tourism". He notes that many communities near major battlefields are economically benefiting. An accompanying chart shows the most popular battlefields in terms of 1977 attendance. Gettysburg heads the list with over 1.5 million visitors.

"Confederates' Descendants Keep Tradition in Brazil" by Warren Hoge, *The New York Times*, August 19, 1979, p. 55. A report from Americana, Brazil, about the descendants of a group of Confederates who came there after the Civil War to get as far away from the Yankees as possible. Despite the fact many have only briefly or never visited the U.S., they still sound and act like Americans from the South.

"The Glorious Bird" by Gerald Carson, *Natural History* (The American Museum of Natural History), June/July, 1979. The career of Old Abe, the bald eagle that traveled throughout the War with the Eighth Wisconsin, is described.

BULLETIN BOARD



FUTURE MEETINGS

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

October 12: Robert K. Krick on "E.P. Alexander, Peerless and Insightful Cannoneer".

October 21: Fall Tour to Milwaukee.

November 9: Dr. Daniel P. Jordan on "Richmond, First City of the Confederacy".

December 14: Henry Pomerantz on "Aldie, Middleburg, and Upperville, Prelude to Gettysburg and Aftermath of Brandy Station".

January 11: Dr. John Y. Simon on "Grant as Historian: The Memoirs Revisited".

February 8: Dr. James Lee McDonough on "The Last Day at Stones River".

March 14: Dr. John G. Barrett on "From Glory to Disrepute: Sherman in the Carolinas".

April 11: Ralph G. Newman on "The Lights Go On Again At Ford's Theater".

April 30, May 1-4: Annual Battlefield Tour to the Shenandoah Valley.

May 9: To be announced.

June 13: Nevins-Freeman Award Dinner and installation of officers.

Every Monday: Informal noon luncheon meetings at Wieboldt's Men's Grill, 9th Floor, State and Madison; all members welcome.

Last Tuesday of each month: Informal noon luncheon meetings at Caravelle Motel, River Road and Bryn Mawr Avenue, Rosemont; all members welcome.

CHANGES OF ADDRESS

Hamilton Pitt, 515 W. Briar #210, Chicago, Illinois 60657.

Bob Krick, and his new book, *Lee's Colonels: A Biographical Register of the Field Officers of the Army of Northern Virginia* which was published recently by the Morningside Bookshop, were featured in an article in the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* on August 13. The article points out that Bob produced the book in his spare time over a three year period, and that the effort cost him many weekends in the recesses of the Library of Congress. It also explains how Bob searched through county records throughout the South to track the often obscure postwar fates of some officers.

Bob is quoted as saying that, "Somebody needed to do it," noting that comparable studies of major Northern armies have been done. The author of the *Times-Dispatch* article, *Will Marshall*, says Krick's "reference work might have appealed only to ardent historians or genealogists if it wasn't for Krick's ability to capture his subjects' most interesting traits and compress them." *Lee's Colonels* consists of nearly 2,000 brief biographical sketches and tables giving the ages, social backgrounds and occupations of the officers.