

THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

Volume XL, Number 5

Chicago, Illinois

January, 1980

JOHN Y. SIMON ON GRANT AS HISTORIAN: THE MEMOIRS REVISITED

Just how good a historian was Ulysses S. Grant? How accurate are his memoirs? Considering "Grant as Historian," and reexamining his *Memoirs*, at the meeting on January 11 will be The Round Table's old friend John Y. Simon. As Executive Director of the Ulysses S. Grant Association and editor of Grant's papers, John is perhaps uniquely qualified to deal with this subject. And, as those who have heard him before will attest, he is also an excellent speaker. Clearly, January 11 will be an interesting, informative evening.

John's talk will deal with the dramatic circumstances under which Grant wrote his recollections of the Civil War, with much of the book composed while he was dying of cancer and making a desperate effort to provide money for his wife and children. Under those conditions, John feels, it is important to consider the question of what Grant actually wrote, especially since Mark Twain took such an active role in the project as publisher. Finally, John adds, the *Memoirs* ought to be evaluated as a historical statement, examining accuracy and the way in which the book presents Grant's unique perspective on the War and his judgement of both U.S. and Confederate commanders.

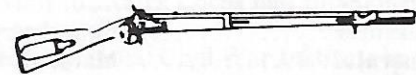


Dr. John Y. Simon

John Simon, in addition to serving as Executive Director of the Grant Association, a position he has held since 1962, is also a Professor of History at Southern Illinois University. He received his B.A. from Swarthmore College, and his M.A. and Ph.D. degrees from Harvard. He taught at Harvard and Ohio State before joining Southern Illinois as an Associate Professor in 1964.

The published writings of John Simon are far too numerous to list fully. His books include *Ulysses S. Grant Chronology* (1963), *General Grant by Matthew Arnold with a Rejoinder by Mark Twain* (1966), *The Personal Memoirs of Julia Dent Grant* (1975), and, of course, *The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant*. The first volume of *The Papers*, covering the period 1837-1861, was published in 1967. Now, eight volumes, bringing the papers up to July, 1863, have been completed.

Among John's articles are "A Lieutenant's View of Shiloh," *Confederate Historical Society Journal* (1964); "The Remains of the Confederacy," *Manuscripts* (1969); "Union County in 1858 and the Lincoln-Douglas Debate," *Journal of*



387th REGULAR MEETING

JOHN Y. SIMON

ON

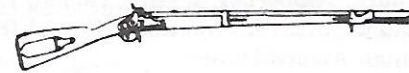
GRANT AS HISTORIAN:
THE *MEMOIRS* REVISITED

FRIDAY, JANUARY 11, 1980

Chicago Bar Association
29 South LaSalle Street, Chicago

Cocktails at 5:30 p.m.

Dinner at 6:30 p.m.



the Illinois State Historical Society (1969); "Letters of Admiral Samuel F. Du Pont," *Manuscripts* (1970); and "Lincoln Worship," *Lincoln Herald* (1974).

From 1963-1973, John served as editor of the Ulysses S. Grant Association *Newsletter*, and from 1967-1972 as Civil War editor of *Manuscripts*. He has written articles on Grant for the *Encyclopedia Britannica* (1970) and *World Book Encyclopedia* (1971), and served as historical consultant for "Ohio Has Saved the Union," WOSU-TV, 1965. John is a frequent speaker at universities and colleges and historical organizations throughout the country. He last appeared before our Round Table in June, 1979, when he helped honor Nevins-Freeman Award Recipient Pete Long.

1980 NEVINS-FREEMAN AWARD

The Round Table Executive Committee has selected National Park Service historian Edwin C. Bearss as the 1980 Nevins-Freeman Award recipient. Ed, through the years, has been extremely generous with his time and knowledge to The Civil War Round Table. Not only has he spoken at numerous meetings, he has served as guide on our Battlefield Tours. Ed's latest book is *Forrest at Brice's Cross Roads*. The award will be presented at the Nevins-Freeman dinner on June 13.

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.



The National Park Service has convened a special committee to consider the question of removing the modern art mosaic benches which now surround Grant's Tomb in New York, and which many feel are totally out of place there. In its first meeting in November, it was clear that some members were very impressed by the strength of the pro-bench forces. Another meeting is set for January, and it is important that persons favoring removal of the benches make their views known by writing to the Secretary of the Interior, Hon. Cecil Andrus, Interior Building, Washington,

D.C. 20240, as well as their senators. Currently, pro-bench letters outnumber anti-bench letters 3 to 2.

President Merlin Sumner, who has been circulating petitions demanding removal, reports that those petitions will be submitted to Andrus early this month. Further information about Grant's Tomb and the mosaic bench issue appears in *The Dispatch*, published by the New York Round Table. Copies of the special General Grant issue (December, 1979) are available from Merl.

And while you are writing, a letter to your congressman supporting a new management plan now under consideration for the expansion of Stones River National Battlefield is also needed. The park, which has been badly used over the years from the standpoint of the historic integrity of the battlefield, desperately needs to move ahead on acquiring property for a minimum buffer zone. The urban development of the Murfreesboro area is rapidly encroaching on the park. For more about the Stones River plan, see Wayne Anderson's report on the Fifth Round Table Congress in the November newsletter.

Historian Frank E. Vandiver, who was provost and vice president of Rice University, has been named president of North Texas State University in Denton. A student of the Confederacy, Vandiver has written many well received books on the Civil War era, including *Mighty Stonewall* and *Their Tattered Flags*. Last year, his *Black Jack: The Life and Times of John J. Pershing* was nominated as one of the five best books in the biography and autobiography category of the 29th annual National Book Awards. Vandiver will take over as president of North Texas State in August.

Until recently it was thought there were no Confederate soldiers buried in the Vicksburg National Military Cemetery—now it turns out there are at least two. First, about three years ago, Al Scheller of the Vicksburg National Military Park did some research on a Reuben White of Texas who is buried in the cemetery and discovered that he was actually a private in Company D of the 19th Texas. Then, last spring, Jacksonville Civil War Round Table member Douglas Arp came across the grave of Charles B. Brantley who was listed in Company D, 12th Battalion, Arkansas Sharp Shooters. Arp didn't think the Federal forces had a 12th Arkansas battalion, and his suspicions were confirmed by Arkansas state historian John Ferguson. It turns out that Confederate soldier Brantley was wounded and captured in October, 1862, and later died in a Federal hospital.

Meanwhile, in Oklahoma, archaeologists have been hired to search for a mass grave of Confederate soldiers killed in Oklahoma's only major Civil War battle. The bodies of about 100 soldiers, many of them Cherokee Indians who fought for the South, were buried in a trench after the Union victory at the Battle of Honey Springs in 1863. The bodies of several Union soldiers buried with the Confederate dead were dug up about 10 years later and reburied at Fort Gibson. But the others were covered with earth and the exact site of the mass grave is not known. The Honey Springs Battlefield Commission is financing the \$8,000 search, scheduled to begin next spring under direction of the University of Oklahoma Archaeological Survey.

And at Shiloh, the bodies of two Confederate soldiers who were recently found in a shallow grave just outside the park were laid to rest, with military honors, beside one of five mass burial trenches for Confederate soldiers in the park.

DECEMBER MEETING

The Union cavalry's coming of age, during the Gettysburg campaign of June, 1863, was the subject of remarks by Henry Pomerantz when he addressed 79 fellow members and guests at the Round Table meeting on December 14. Specifically, he focused on the three little-known battles at Aldie, Middleburg and Upperville.

Henry began by noting that the cavalry symbolized the romance of the Civil War. Being in it was exciting and appealed to the spirit of adventure. But it was also a tough and hazardous job. He also explained that during the Gettysburg campaign—Brandy Station, Aldie, Middleburg, and Upperville—the Union cavalry corps was at the height of its powers, having matured and developed over the first two years of the war.

After Chancellorsville, the South decided on another invasion of the North. Union General Joe Hooker's orders to cavalry commander Alfred Pleasonton to reconnoiter the Confederates led, on June 9, to the Battle of Brandy Station—the first major victory of the Union cavalry. On June 10 Hooker requested permission to attack Richmond which he felt was ill-defended. However, Lee had created panic in the North and Lincoln maintained that Lee must be Hooker's objective. In Henry's opinion, a move toward Richmond may have forced Lee to change his plans.

As the Confederates moved north, with Stuart's cavalry screening and protecting them, Hooker sought to find out what Lee intended to do, and ordered the movement of two corps to Manassas Junction. Then, at 3 a.m. on June 17, Union cavalry began moving toward Aldie. They surprised and drove back Confederate pickets, but were themselves driven back by a countercharge. As more Federal forces moved up, the Confederates fell back to strong positions; sharpshooters behind a stone wall chopped up the Union troopers. Finally, late in the day, the Confederates withdrew toward Middleburg.

Also on June 17, Duffie was ordered to move out westward from Manassas Gap. He encountered Confederate skirmishers and drove them back to Middleburg. However, he was attacked about 7 p.m. and withdrew to Aldie—most of his regiment was killed or wounded. Henry explained that Pleasonton's failure to aid Duffie may have been due to his prejudice toward foreigners (Duffie was a Frenchman).

The Confederate position at Middleburg was very strong and Union charges on June 19 were beaten back—much of the fighting was hand to hand. Union reinforcements finally forced the Confederates to withdraw, but they were able to reform and check further Federal advances. Stuart finally withdrew about one and one-half miles to the west.

By June 21 all five of Stuart's brigades were in Loudan Valley. He was primarily concerned with Upperville, a small village about six miles west of Middleburg, and he had both the turnpike and another road to the town covered. Union infantry began to concentrate in the area, but Hooker still did not know what Lee had in mind. Nevertheless, Pleasonton considered counterreconnaissance—and not finding out where Lee's main force was located—his mission.

The battle at Upperville began with a federal advance down both roads toward the town. The Confederates only fought a delaying action to provide time for their main force to form at Upperville. Fighting began in earnest about 3 p.m.; by 5:30 the Union forces had taken the town. Pleasonton broke off pursuit, believing that he had accomplished his mission.

In evaluating Pleasonton, Henry said he was not a great cavalry leader. His criticism of Meade's failure to pursue Lee after Gettysburg got him transferred to Missouri—a graveyard for commanders. This criticism was particularly

ironic, in Henry's opinion, because Pleasonton himself had failed to follow up on his victory at Upperville. But, his activities did help insure the safety of Hooker, and slowed the Confederate advance toward Gettysburg.

With regard to Stuart, Henry said there was no doubt his pride was injured by Brandy Station, and he stayed in the background at Aldie, Middleburg and Upperville. (Stuart himself said this was because he had given all necessary orders and carrying them out was up to the brigade commanders.) After Upperville, Stuart wanted to do something dramatic to repair his prestige and submitted a plan to Lee for a move behind the Union army. Lee approved on the condition that he keep in touch—something he failed to do. His actions cost the South the advantage at Gettysburg.

In summing up the engagements at Aldie, Middleburg and Upperville, Henry noted that although they took their toll (827 Union and 660 Confederate soldiers killed, wounded or missing) they showed the Union cavalry was an effective fighting force that could stand up to Stuart. They showed that the Union Cavalry Corps had finally come of age.

The Second Annual Civil War Institute on "Campaigning with Lee," sponsored by the History Department and Extension Division of Virginia Tech and led by Dr. James I. Robertson, has been scheduled for June 14-21, 1980 in Williamsburg, Virginia. This year's Institute will concentrate on campaigns in Richmond, Petersburg, and the Virginia Peninsula. These campaigns, their leaders, and other related topics will be treated in classroom meetings and in all-day bus tours to the battlefield sites. Plans are also being formulated for a visit to Fort Monroe at Hampton Roads. Among those assisting Bud Robertson are Dr. Ludwell H. Johnson of the College of William and Mary and Dr. Daniel P. Jordan of Virginia Commonwealth University.

The Institute will be based on the campus of the College of William and Mary. The facilities of the college will be used for classroom meetings, dormitory lodging, and food service. The fee is \$200. This includes registration, instructional leadership and materials, bus tours, seven breakfasts, five luncheons, six dinners, seven nights dormitory lodging (double occupancy), and administrative costs. Registration deadline is March 15. For further information about registration, contact Dr. L. G. Leffel, Donaldson Brown Center, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg, Virginia 24061 (703) 961-5241. For program information, contact Dr. James Robertson, 518 McBryde Hall, Virginia Tech, Blacksburg (703) 961-5510.

The seventh annual Abraham Lincoln Symposium will be held in the Hall of Representatives, Old State Capitol, Springfield, Illinois, at 1:30 p.m., February 12, 1980. The theme is "Lincoln and Blacks." John T. Hubbell, Associate Professor of History at Kent State University and Editor of *Civil War History*, will speak on "Lincoln and the Recruitment of Black Soldiers." Arthur Zilvermit, Professor of History at Lake Forest College, Lake Forest, Illinois, will speak on "Lincoln and the Problem of Race." There is no registration fee.

Mary Frances Berry, Assistant secretary for Education, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, will address the Annual Banquet. Dr. Berry is on leave from the University of Colorado where she is Professor of History and Law. The Banquet will be held in the Springfield Marine Bank (where Lincoln banked) on February 12. For further information about the Symposium and Banquet tickets write to Roger D. Bridges, Director of Research, Illinois State Historical Library, Old State Capitol, Springfield, Illinois 62706.

THE NEW BOOKS



(Compiled by Dick Clark)

Ashe, Samuel A. *A Southern View of the Invasion of the Southern States*. Wendell, N.C.: Broadfoot, 1979. 75 p., wraps. ltd. 500. Reprint of 1935 ed. \$6.00

Davidson, William H. *Word from Camp Pollard, C.S.A.* West Point, Georgia: Davidson Books, 1978. 369 p., illus. \$19.95

Denson, Claude B. *Address Delivered in Raleigh . . . 1895, Containing a Memoir of the Late Major-General William Henry Chase Whiting*. Wendell, N.C.: Broadfoot, 1979. 56 p., wraps. ltd 500. \$5.00. Reprint 1985 ed.

Elliott, James Carson. *The Southern Soldier Boy*. (of the 56th Infantry.) Wendell, N.C.: Broadfoot, 1979. 77 p., wraps. ltd 500. Reprint of 1907 ed. \$5.00

Johnson, Ann Donegan. *The Value of Helping: The Story of Harriet Tubman*. La Jolla, Calif.: Value Communications, 1979. \$5.95

McKee, Ivan N. *Lost Family—Lost Cause: A Story of the McKee Family in Wayne County, Missouri during the Civil War Years*. Freeman, S. Dakota: Pine Hill Press, 1978. 95 p., illus. ltd 500. \$10.00

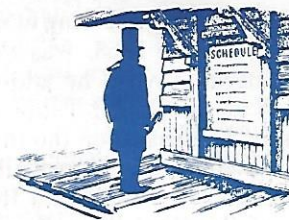
Eaton, Edward Bailey. *The Real American Tragedy. Oklahoma City: Homsey-Simon Production Co., 1979. \$150.00. Reproduction of the Eaton, Original Photographs taken on the Battlefields during the Civil War of the United States, by Mathew B. Brady and Alexander Gardner . . . 1907.*

Simpson, Harold B. *Cry Comanche. The 2nd U.S. Cavalry in Texas, 1855-1861*. Hillsboro, Texas: Hill Junior College Press, 1979. \$10.50

Thomas, Wilbur Dillen. *General James "Pete" Longstreet, Lee's "Old War Horse" Scapegoat for Gettysburg*. Parson, WV: McClain Printing Company, 1979. \$21.00

The Executive Committee, at its meeting on December 14, approved a proposal for a special award to Round Table Honorary Award Life Member and historian Stanley Horn. Stan, who was born in 1889, is the author of many distinguished Civil War books, including: *The Army of Tennessee* and *The Robert E. Lee Reader*. He has spoken to us on many occasions and has participated as guide and host at several Battlefield Tours. He has been an enthusiastic supporter of The Civil War Round Table movement from its beginning in 1940. Details of the special award will be worked out and announced at a later date.

An unusually large cache of Civil War minie balls was discovered recently on a farm near Lebanon, Kentucky, but how they got there can only be a subject of speculation. The town of Lebanon was occupied by Union troops during much of the War. It was also captured a couple of times by Confederate raiders. However, the town is about five miles from the farm. Some area residents believe that the ammunition was hidden away, and then forgotten or abandoned, by one of the guerrilla bands that operated in Kentucky during the War.



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 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 "From Glory to Disrepute: Sherman in the Carolinas".

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

May 9: Dr. Walter L. Brown on "Albert Pike as Confederate General."

May 14-18: Annual Battlefield Tour to the Shenandoah Valley.

June 13: Nevins-Freeman Award Dinner and installation of officers. Recipient of Award: Edwin C. Bearss.

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.

NEW MEMBERS

James P. McCorry, 14058 Ethel Ct., Apt. 2-W, Rosemont, Illinois 60018.

Patricia M. O'Hern, 3014 W. Columbus, Chicago, Illinois 60652.

Carl F. Waedt, 5317 W. 96th Street, Oak Lawn, Illinois 60453.

As Barry Crompton of the American Civil War Round Table of Australia, who visited us in October, can attest, interest in the Civil War abroad is considerable. Providing further evidence of this fact are two recently published books: *Confederates*, a novel by the Australian writer Thomas Keneally, and *Nathaniel Beverly Tucker: Prophet of the Confederacy* by Beverly D. Tucker (Japan). According to a review in *The Guardian*, in *Confederates*, "The wrack of battle, and its terrible ironies and ecstasies, are evoked in scenes that sear; orderlies searching the dead by firelight for bandages for the living, the execution of a farm boy deserter tricked into substituting for a conscript . . . one smells the stench of war and hears the bugles as men and causes, Yank and Reb, are swept along in the same blind torrent."

Nathaniel Tucker, an advocate of the Southern cause, lived from 1784 to 1851, wrote several forgotten novels, and said he hoped to be remembered as "one of the founders of the glorious Southern Confederacy." Beverly Tucker, a professor of English and American Literature at Doshisha University in Kyoto, is descended from Nathaniel. The book comes with a wraparound advertisement and bookmark printed in Japanese; the book itself is in English.