

THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

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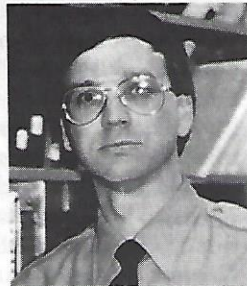
December, 1985

Christopher M. Calkins on The Ragged and Starved Confederates: An Examination of the Condition of Lee's Army, 1864-65

On January 22, 1864, Robert E. Lee issued General Order No. 7 from headquarters of the Army of Northern Virginia. It began: "The Commanding General considers it due to the army to state that the temporary reduction of rations has been caused by circumstances beyond the control of those charged with its support.... It is hoped that the exertions now being made will render the necessity but of short duration..." The order concluded with an appeal that the soldiers emulate the valor of their forefathers and with the assurance that "the just God... will, in his good time, send down His blessing upon yours" (efforts).

The general interpretation concerning the condition of Lee's army in the final year of the war has been characterized as being 'ragged and starving.' The reason given for this state of being was that the South was devoid of food and supplies by this stage of the war. On December 13, Christopher M. Calkins, historian at Petersburg National Battlefield, will address the Round Table and attempt to explain why and when these conditions existed. He will further discuss whether or not this was generally a true representation for the entire period covering the Overland (May-June 1864), Petersburg (June 1864-April 1864) and Appomattox (April 1865) campaigns. In his address he will make use of official Confederate documents regarding resources available in February, 1865, letters and diaries (many of which conflict), period photographs taken in May, 1864 and April, 1865, and selected artifacts. Those who attended our 35th annual battlefield tour last May will recall the excellent work that Chris did in narrating the events that ended the fighting at Appomattox Court House.

A native of Detroit, Michigan, Chris studied at Western Michigan University and received his B.S. degree from Longwood College, located in Farmville, Virginia. His work in the National Park Service began at Appomattox Court House National Historic Park in 1971. In 1977 he transferred to Fredericksburg-Spotsylvania National Military Park where he served on the Historian's staff. Since May, 1981, he has held the position of historian at Petersburg National Battlefield.



Christopher M. Calkins



446th Regular Meeting

Christopher M. Calkins
on

The Ragged and Starved Confederates:
An Examination of the Condition of
Lee's Army, 1864-65

Friday, December 13, 1985

Quality Inn

Halsted and Madison

Cocktails at 5:30 p.m. Dinner at 6:30 p.m.

\$13.00 per person

Entree: Veal Cutlet, Fish or Fruit Plate



Meeting room

At the December meeting, the cocktail hour will be held in the Monroe Room; the dinner and talk will be in the Mid-City Room. Both are on the second floor of the Quality Inn.

His publications include *Thirty Six Hours Before Appomattox* (1980) and *From Petersburg to Appomattox, April 2-9, 1865* (1983). With Edwin C. Bearss, Chief Historian of the Park Service, he co-authored *The Five Forks Campaign* (1985). He is currently preparing a sequel to *Thirty Six Hours* which will cover the military events around Appomattox Court House on April 8-9, 1865. This research is being funded by an advance research grant awarded by the U.S. Army Military History Institute at the Army War College in Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania.

His skills include military cartography, and he has

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THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE



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 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 Dan Weinberg, 18 East Chestnut Street, Chicago, Illinois 60611.



(continued from page 1)

produced maps for the Virginia Regimental Series and other works on the Civil War. From 1982 to 1984, he served as adjunct professor for the University of Virginia, teaching a course entitled 'The Study of the Civil War through Artifacts'. In 1984-85, he was an instructor and tour guide for 'Bud' Robertson's seminar, 'Campaigning with Lee', held at the University of Richmond and the University of Virginia. In 1984, Chris received a special assignment to prepare a study to nominate Saylor's Creek battlefield a National Historic Landmark, and the battlefield was so designated in October, 1984. In May, 1979, he spoke to our Round Table on the Appomattox Campaign.

The University of Richmond is seeking contributions to endow the Douglas Southall Freeman Chair at the University. The Chair was established in 1983 with a challenge gift of \$300,000 from Dr. Freeman's daughter, Mary Tyler Cheek and her husband Leslie Cheek, Jr. When fully endowed at \$1 million, the chair will enable the University to bring to campus on a yearly basis a Freeman Scholar-in-Residence, nationally prominent historians who will interact with students, faculty and the Richmond community.

In 1863, 4,000 Americans died fighting for the road at Chickamauga in one of the bloodiest of Civil War battles. Today, that road is the site of another battle, bloodless but no less intense, between preservationists and pragmatists.

The two-lane road through the Chickamauga Battlefield Park is a major route for commuters going to and from Chattanooga and accidents are common; everyone agrees something needs to be done. Georgia Department of Transportation officials estimate it would cost \$4 million to widen the existing road, but \$20 million to go around the park. The National Park Service has agreed to pay Georgia the difference for building the by-pass, but commuters insist the only viable alternative is widening the existing road. Georgia congressmen are pressing Interior Secretary Donald Hodel to widen the road.

You are encouraged to write to your senators about this problem (U.S. Senate, Washington D.C. 20510); to Georgia Senator Mack Mattingley; Donald Hodel, Secretary of the Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240; and Director of the National Park Service William Penn Mott, Sr. (20240).

Dennis Walters, the recently hired director of the Cyclorama in Atlanta, has created a furor with his decision to repaint the cannon tubes on the painting. Walters, whose academic work is in history, museums and art restoration, redid the tubes in a dusty bronze rather than the gray-green of tarnished brass. Gustave Berger, a nationally known art preservationist who restored the painting three years ago, called Walters' effort "an attack" on the artwork. Berger refuses to admit that the cannon tubes should have been painted bronze during the restoration. (From the Harpers Ferry Round Table newsletter).

North Carolina honored its 26th regiment by dedicating a monument to the unit at Gettysburg on October 5. It was the first Southern regimental marker erected on the field in over 80 years. The monument, a bronze plaque mounted on a base of pink granite from Salisbury, North Carolina, was erected by the North Caroliniana Society and the North Carolina Historical Commission.

November meeting

On November 8, Donald C. Pfanz was the featured speaker at the 445th Regular Meeting of The Civil War Round Table. The topic he presented to the 102 members and guests who attended was, "Negligence on the Right: The 11th Corps at Chancellorsville."

In January, 1863, Major General Joe Hooker was named commander of the Army of the Potomac. At that time, the army was in poor shape. In December, 1862, it was defeated at Fredericksburg and it had recently returned to its winter camp following the infamous "Mud March." Desertion, disease and low morale were rampant. Hooker's first responsibility was to return the Army of the Potomac to fighting condition.

As part of his re-organization, Hooker discarded the cumbersome "Grand Division" concept used by his predecessor, Ambrose Burnside. The Army of the Potomac reverted to seven infantry and one cavalry corps. By April, 1863, Hooker had command of over 130,000 men. They had recovered from Fredericksburg and the "Mud March," morale was high, and the soldiers were ready for another campaign.

The 11th Corps was assigned to the Army of the Potomac in December, 1862, after the Battle of Fredericksburg. However, the soldiers of the Corps were not accepted with any enthusiasm by the Potomac veterans. There were two reasons for this. One was that the 11th Corps was an untested organization. Of its 27 regiments, 11 had never been in battle. The soldiers would have to prove themselves in the next campaign in order to earn the respect of the rest of the Army.

The second reason for the 11th Corps' non-acceptance was that over half of its soldiers were first-generation Americans. Germans were the predominant ethnic group, but there were others, including Poles, Italians, and Hungarians. Many of the soldiers could not speak English and the 11th Corps was looked upon as a second-rate outfit.

Also, there was dissension within the ranks of the 11th Corps. In April, 1863, Major General Oliver O. Howard assumed command, succeeding the popular, but incompetent, Franz Siegel. To the German-American soldiers, Howard was an "outsider" and an usurper. Howard did not fully trust the men of his command, and the distrust was mutual.

In late April, 1863, Hooker moved his army to trap and destroy Lee's Confederates. His plan was two-fold. Sedgewick, with two corps, would march to Fredericksburg and pin the Confederate forces there. The remainder of the Army of the Potomac would march north in a wide arc and approach the Confederates from the rear. The initial movement went well, until Hooker's troopers met their initial resistance on May 1. Hooker ordered the army to halt and emplace in defensive positions around Chancellorsville. The soldiers began to dig entrenchments and wait for further orders.

The 11th Corps occupied the position on the extreme Union right and was positioned along the Orange Turnpike. Only two of its regiments were assigned to guard the right flank. This area was known as The Wilderness and many Union officers felt that no large body of troops could march and fight in that area. The rest of the Corps faced south and southwest, believing that any Confederate attack would come from those directions.

J.E.B. Stuart's cavalry found that the 11th Corps' right flank was "in the air" and not organized around any prominent terrain feature. When Lee heard of this, a plan was

developed whereby Jackson and his entire corps would march around the Army of the Potomac (a distance of 26 miles) and then attack and roll-up the Union line. In the meantime, Lee with 17,000 men would demonstrate on Hooker's front and keep that portion of the Union forces occupied.

At 2:30 p.m. on May 2, Jackson's corps completed its march, but it took until 5 p.m. to get the regiments into their battle formations. At 6 p.m., Jackson's corps attacked along the Orange Turnpike. The first opposition they met were the two regiments of Von Gilsa's brigade who were facing west. These regiments were quickly overrun and the Confederates continued to advance. Many soldiers of the 11th Corps were taken by surprise. They were cooking dinner by the campfires and their rifles were stacked; no one was expecting a Confederate attack from the west.

Some regiments of the 11th Corps formed up and resisted Jackson's attack while other regiments fled in panic down the Orange Turnpike. Howard tried to rally his troops and organize a new battle line, but it was too late. Several thousand 11th Corps soldiers were driven from their positions, and the Corps would be known to the rest of the Army of the Potomac as "The Flying Dutchmen."

In his analysis, Don stated that the Union commanders were to blame for the disaster on the right flank. Reports were sent to Hooker about Jackson's march and they were ignored. Also, Hooker did not inspect the lines to determine where any weaknesses might exist. Howard, in particular, was criticized for the way he handled his command. Like Hooker, he received reports about Confederate movements, but he took no action. The way in which he positioned his corps was faulty. Howard did not secure his right flank, and only two regiments were positioned to stop all of Jackson's corps. This was but a prelude to disaster.

Lincoln as lawyer

The Illinois State Historical Society in Springfield has embarked on a project to collect and compile documents relating to Lincoln's 23-year legal career in Central Illinois. According to historian William Beard, who is heading the project, "this is one of the most significant editing jobs in the country right now." He says the project will eventually shed light on the legal system in Illinois and on how Lincoln evolved into the great president he became.

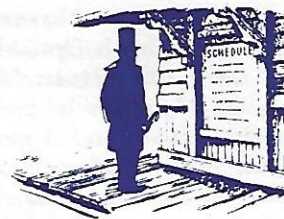
About 4000 Lincoln legal documents are preserved and stored in a State Historical Society vault. Other documents are in the Library of Congress and university libraries. But a vast number of documents are in private hands, Beard says. After Lincoln's death, anything with his signature on it became a thing of value and people removed many documents from courthouses in and around the then-8th judicial circuit.

Lincoln's legal career has been largely ignored up to this time, Beard said, partly because the legal profession had a bad reputation during the 1920s when historians were documenting Lincoln's life. Because Lincoln was a lawyer who worked for his clients—whether he believed in them morally or not—historians might have been afraid of what they would find, Beard said. "The 'Gilded Age' created a very negative image of lawyers, and nobody wanted to tarnish Lincoln's image."

The project is expected to take at least five more years. (The above is adapted from an article in the *Chicago Daily Law Bulletin*.)

The New Books

compiled by Dick Clark



BULLETIN BOARD

Arbetman, Lee and Richard L. Roe. *Great Trials in American History: Civil War to the Present*. St. Paul: West, 1984. 209 p. pbk \$10.95.

Bearss, Edwin C. *The Campaign for Vicksburg*. Volume I. Dayton: Morningside House, 1985. 769 p. \$37.50.

Cavada, Fredrick F. *Libby Life: Experiences of a Prisoner of War in Richmond, Va., 1863-64*. Foreword by Joseph J. Jova. Lanham, MD: University Press of America. 221 p. pbk \$12.50. Concerns 14th Pennsylvania Inf.

Clark, Champ. *Gettysburg: The Confederate High Tide*. By Chap Clark and the editors of Time-Life Books. Alexandria, VA: Time-Life Books, 1985. \$19.95.

Darroch, Lois E. *Four Went to the Civil War*. Kitchener, Ont.: McBain Publications, Inc., 1985. \$22.50; pbk \$12.50.

Davis, Archie K. *Boy Colonel of the Confederacy: The Life and Times of Henry King Burgwyn, Jr.* Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1985. 406 p. \$29.95.

Davis, Lenwood G. and George Hill. *Blacks in the American Armed Forces, 1776-1983: A Bibliography*. Compiled by... Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1985. 198 p. \$35.00.

Davis, William C., editor. *Touched by Fire: A Photographic Portrait of the Civil War*. Volume One. Boston: Little, Brown, 1985. \$50.00.

Downey, Fairfax. *Clash of Cavalry: The Battle of Brandy Station*. Gaithersburg, MD: Butternut Press, 1985. 238 p. \$25.00. Original of 1959.

Glathaar, Joseph T. *The March to the Sea and Beyond: Sherman's Troops in the Savannah and Carolinas Campaigns*. New York: New York University Press, 1985. \$27.95.

Grant, Ulysses Simpson. *The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant*. Volume 13: November 16, 1864-February 20, 1865. Edited by John Y. Simon. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1985. 599 p. \$45.00.

Grant, Ulysses Simpson. *The Papers of Ulysses S. Grant*. Volume 14: February 21-April 30, 1865. Edited by John Y. Simon. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1985. 548 p. \$45.00.

Holien, Kim Bernard. *Battle at Ball's Bluff*. Orange, VA: Moss Publications, 1985. 166 p., maps, illus., bibliog., index. \$24.95.

Hutton, Paul A. *Phil Sheridan and His Army*. Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1985. \$29.95; pbk \$14.95.

Irwin, Richard B. *The Nineteenth Army Corps*. Baton Rouge, LA: Elliott's Book Shop Press, 1985. 528 p. \$35.00. Reprint of issue of 1892.

Jackson, Donald D. *Twenty Million Yankees: The Northern Home Front*. (The Civil War, vol. 14). Chicago: Time-Life Books.

Ohio. *Personal Reminiscences and Experiences*, by Members of the One Hundred and Third Ohio Volunteer Infantry. Campaign Life in the Union Army, from 1862 to 1865. Sheffield Lake, Ohio: 103rd Memorial Foundation, 1985. 444 p. \$25.00. Original of 1900.

Rice, Otis K. *West Virginia: A History*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1985. 326 p. \$25.00. More than a third given over to the Civil War.

Future meetings

Regular meetings are held at the Quality Inn, Halsted and Madison, the second Friday in each month, except as noted.

December 13: Christopher Calkins on "The Ragged and Starved Confederates: An Examination of the Condition of Lee's Army, 1864-65."

January 10, 1986: "Our Ethnic Ancestors in the Civil War;" a panel featuring Wayne Anderson, Marshall Krol-ick, Bill Sullivan, Karl Sundstrom, and Jim Vlazny.

February 14: Mark E. Neeley, Jr., on "Lincoln and Douglas: A Relationship to Consider."

March 15: All day (Saturday) assembly on "Lieutenant General Ulysses S. Grant: The Civil War Years."

April 11: Edgar Archer on "Orthopedic Surgery in the Civil War."

May 1-4: Annual Battlefield Tour: The 1862 Peninsula Campaign.

May 9: Gordon Whitney on "The President Will Now Make a Few Remarks."

June 6: James I. "Bud" Robertson on "Confederate General A. P. Hill." **Note:** This is the first Friday of the month.

New members

John Beale, 4731 St. Joseph Creek Road, Lisle, Illinois 60532 (312) 968-5107.

Richard Wagner, P.O. Box 08278, Chicago, Illinois 60608 (312) 376-0510.

Change of address

Malcolm Macht, 49 Washington St., Malone, New York 12953.

Gordon Whitney, a past president of our Round Table who now lives in Madison, Indiana, reports that he has organized a Round Table there called the Jefferson County Civil War Round Table. They have about 35 members and are growing with each meeting. Gordon has the distinction of serving as president of three different Round Tables—Chicago, Jefferson County, and Louisville. He will be speaking to us in May about Lincoln at Gettysburg ("The President Will Now Make a Few Remarks").

The National Trust and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, who were to begin diving August 15 to determine whether the ironclad Monitor should be preserved in place or recovered, have rescheduled the dive for June, 1986. The wreck, which was discovered in 1973, is 220 feet below the surface of the Atlantic, about 16 miles from Cape Hatteras. By June, 1987, researchers should be able to determine the feasibility of raising the Monitor or stabilizing it in place.

On behalf of the newsletter staff and the officers of The Round Table, we wish all members and their families a joyous holiday season and a healthy and prosperous new year.