

THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

Volume XLIX, Number 2

Chicago, Illinois

October, 1988

Lance J. Herdegen and William J.K. Beaudot on The Charge on the Railroad Cut at Gettysburg

by Barbara Hughett

Former high private and Iron Brigade veteran James P. "Mickey" Sullivan traveled from Vernon County, Wisconsin to Madison in 1883 to visit the State Historical Society. The purpose of his journey was to read the written record of his famous brigade. The 44-year old farmer of Irish descent came away disappointed. There was, he had discovered, no history of his brigade or his regiment. In order to fill this inexcusable void, he decided that he would write the record of his company, and his regiment, the 6th Wisconsin Infantry, and of his comrades from the great war of 1861-65.

When "Mickey" Sullivan sat down to write, his first account was the the 6th Wisconsin at Gettysburg. "In all my experience of battles, he wrote, "it was the only place where bayonets and clubbed muskets were used." He told how, on that Wednesday morning of July 1, 1863, in the first clash of infantry, with the thin, makeshift Union line in danger of being overwhelmed, his 6th Wisconsin Infantry came up on the run to charge Confederates firing from the cover of an unfinished railroad cut. There was a brief, sharp fight. The Western regiment took more than 200 prisoners, captured the flag of the 2nd Mississippi, and restored the Federal position. The Wisconsin men always believed what they had done on that hot morning was not only the regiment's brightest moment in four years of fighting, but a key factor in the Union victory at Gettysburg, and perhaps in the entire war.

On October 14th, Lance J. Herdegen and William J.K. Beaudot will address The Civil War Round Table, telling the story of what those Wisconsin soldiers did that morning at Gettysburg, how they remembered it, and their lingering resentment in later years over a feeling their great deed had been overlooked in the hundreds of accounts of



474th Regular Meeting

Lance Herdegen and
William J.K. Beaudot
on

The Charge on the Railroad
Cut at Gettysburg

Friday, October 14, 1988

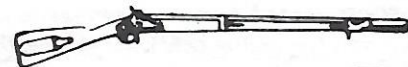
Quality Inn

Halsted and Madison

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

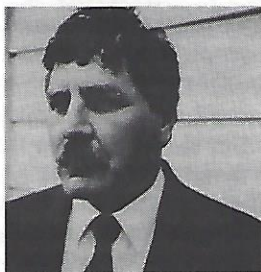
\$15.00 per person

Entree: Veal Parmesan, Fish, or Fruit Plate

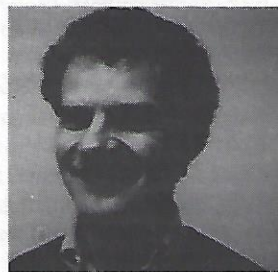


the battle. Using dozens of recently unearthed sources, they will speak not only about the noted charge, but also about some of the "Calico Boys" of the 6th Wisconsin who made this charge possible.

Mr. Herdegen and Mr. Beaudot are graduates of the School of Journalism, Marquette University. Herdegen, a veteran political writer and editor for United Press International, is currently UPI Regional Director for eight Midwestern states. Beaudot, a management librarian with the Milwaukee Public Library, received his MLS from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Both are members of the Milwaukee Civil War Round Table, as well as being involved in organizations devoted to marksmanship competition with Civil War firearms. Both have published a wide variety of articles on Wisconsin Civil War topics. Herdegen presently serves as secretary of the Milwaukee CWRT and editor of its newsletter, "General Orders."



Lance J. Herdegen



William J.K. Beaudot

THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE



Founded December 3, 1940

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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 E. Chestnut St., Chicago, IL 60611.



A reminder: Please submit any Round Table memorabilia you may have to the 50th Anniversary Committee. Bring the materials to a meeting or send them to Jerry Warshaw, 748 Hinman Ave., Evanston, IL 60202.

The sunken Union ironclad Monitor has been named the first National Marine Sanctuary and a National Landmark. A survey of the condition of the sunken ship is being conducted by the National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration. Relics from the Monitor will be placed in the Mariners Museum at Newport News, Virginia.

Battlefield Preservation Report

by Dan Josephs

In the June, 1988 Newsletter, this column highlighted various issues involving the Manassas Battlefield Park. The following is an update of that situation.

A compromise proposed by Interior Secretary Donald P. Hodel called for the moving of the mall from a prominent hill to lower ground, a plan which would not necessitate the leveling of Stuart's Hill. According to the June 1, 1988 issue of *The Wall Street Journal*, the mall would be constructed in the area where Lee's army was located prior to the battle. In this same area, the Confederate wounded were cared for and their dead were temporarily buried. Another part of the compromise, calling for the closing of those portions of Virginia Routes 29 and 234 which run through the battlefield, has come under attack from preservationist groups. According to the May 20, 1988 issue of the *Washington Times*, Tersh Boasberg, general counsel for the Save The Battlefield Coalition, said that "It is impossible to close these roads until there are alternate transportation routes. We estimate that would take 10-15 years." The preservationist groups fear what could happen to the battlefield in the meantime, due to the increased flow of traffic. Despite these fears, the Prince William County Board has endorsed the compromise. Preliminary sewer and road work has already begun at the William Center site, in spite of efforts by the Save The Battlefield Coalition to halt such work pending negotiations. The developers, Hazel-Peterson Company, claim they are only working on the residential part of the project, for which they have work permits.

The National Trust For Historic Preservation, along with the National Parks and Conservation Association, has formed a new organization, which will join in efforts to oppose the mall. Known as The National Heritage Coalition, it has the goal of promoting the enactment of Congressional legislation to enable local governments to utilize "lend-lease planning powers" in order to protect historic areas.

Legislation, sponsored by Representatives Andrews and Mrzek, as reported in the September newsletter, was passed by the House of Representatives by a vote of 307-98. The Senate subcommittee on Natural Resources has also approved the bill, but at press time the full Senate had not acted. This bill provides for the following: 1) 542 acres of land at Manassas are to be immediately transferred to the ownership of the U.S. government. 2) The Secretary of the Interior, along with the State of Virginia, is directed to support and preserve the view from the battlefield. 3) A study is to be undertaken by the State of Virginia, the Federal Highway Administration, and Prince William County, regarding the relocation of Highways 29 and 234. \$30 million of federal government money would be authorized, with state and local governments paying an additional amount, consisting of up to 25% of the total cost. Supporters of this bill are urged to contact their U.S. senators.

The Alexandria Civil War Round Table is launching a campaign to raise funds to place markers at the sites of all of the Civil War forts in Alexandria that were part of the defenses of Washington (five in all). The total cost is \$4600. Contributions, made out to The Alexandria CWRT Historical Marker Fund, should be sent to: Alexandria CWRT, c/o Fort Ward Museum, 4301 Braddock Rd., Alexandria, VA 22304.

September Meeting

by Barbara Hughett

The Civil War Round Table conferred its 15th annual Nevins-Freeman Award on Robert K. Krick on September 9, 1988, at its 473rd regular meeting, before 110 members and guests. This award was established to honor individuals for their contributions to the preservation of our nation's heritage and our understanding of the past, especially the years 1861-65. Bob Krick, a longtime friend of The Round Table, is chief historian of the Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park and author of numerous books and articles dealing with the Civil War period. The title of Bob's acceptance address was "The Army of Northern Virginia In September, 1862, Its Circumstances During That Pivotal Month, Its Opportunities, And The Reasons It Should Not Have Been at Sharpsburg on September 15-18, 1862."

Quartermaster and ordinance functions of Lee's army had unraveled to an alarming extent as September, 1862 dawned. In spite of these and other problems, Robert E. Lee felt he had no alternative other than to further his advance across the Potomac River. "Lee stood at the edge of a revolutionary movement," Bob related. "A year or more of Confederate failure, some of it abject in scope, had turned into a floodtide of success under Lee over the past nine weeks." He felt he must stay astride that crest, hoping it would lead to a set of circumstances in which he could lead a victory which would assure his country's independence. Ten days later, when fate had denied Lee the circumstances he sought, he decided to fight the Battle of Antietam at Sharpsburg, Maryland. "That battle," Bob asserted, "he should not have made."

A move across the Potomac appealed to Lee for three reasons: 1) The depleted Confederate homeland south of the river desperately needed surcease from the ravages it had suffered. 2) Maryland offered Lee the chance for a maneuver, which he did incomparably well. 3) Maryland seemed to be politically ripe for liberation from what looked to the Confederates like an intolerable Federal yoke. Lee and other Southern leaders believed that, by going into Maryland, they would be carrying succor to a friendly state. The Lincoln administration had, in essence, suspended the Constitution in Maryland. They had flung uncooperative elected leaders into jail and, it seemed, pinned Maryland to the Union with bayonets. Lee was to learn, however, that the fiery Southern sympathies of eastern Maryland did not extend to the western panhandle where he would operate. The largely German populace in western Maryland felt far more empathy for the Northern cause. The administration's iron hand in eastern Maryland, furthermore, had succeeded in suppressing dissent. "The misapprehension of the Confederate high command about Maryland's enthusiasm for the Southern cause was abetted, doubtlessly," Bob noted, "by the reception given to Lee and Jackson personally." However, this hearty reception was undoubtedly due largely to the fact that the two men were "certifiable celebrities" rather than to significant Southern sympathies.

As this campaign began, Lee, Jackson, and Longstreet were all suffering from physical disabilities. Lee and Jackson had both been injured when they had been thrown to the ground by their horses. Longstreet had chafed his heel so badly due to an ill-fitting boot that he could not ride a horse. Confederate strength in the ranks was pitifully small, Lee having in the neighborhood of half as many men as did

the Federals. Confederates were operating in unfamiliar territory, north of the Potomac. One Virginia artilleryman grumped, "I believe that the confounded Yankees can shoot better in the United States than they can in Dixie's land." The numbers of Confederate stragglers and deserters enroute to Maryland were larger than in any other campaign. A severe shortage of shoes meant that many men were marching on sore, sunburned feet. They were a very ragged, ragamuffin group, as pictures taken during September of 1862 bear out. The National Weather Archives reveal that the temperatures in the area of the campaign at 2 p.m., one of the three reading periods each day, never dropped below 77 degrees, with the majority of days registering above 85 degrees. Additionally, this was the driest September yet on record.

Deterioration existed in the mid-level of command in the Army. Many regiments went into battle with not 100 men, but 50. The whole officer structure was disarrayed. The average regimental strength was 346 for the Union, and 166 for the Confederates. "To these physical and organizational problems," Bob remarked, "must be added a tincture of psychological or spiritual malaise." To these soldiers, used to being led by Joe Johnston, Lee's strategy of moving far and fast was brand new to them. Some didn't feel comfortable with the idea of invading another's country. The pivotal point, of course, occurred when three members of the 27th Indiana found a copy of Special Order #191, Lee's explicit blueprint for the campaign, wrapped around some cigars, in Bob's words, "turning the campaign on its ear." With McClellan's possession of this information, the odds mounted even more heavily against the Southern Army.

While maintaining that the Army of Northern Virginia fought about as well as it could possibly have done in the fields and woodlots above Antietam Creek, Bob believes that Lee's determination to fight this battle was one of his worst decisions of the war. He added that "no remotely reasonable scenario can now be offered, nor could then have been constructed, that afforded Lee the chance to do what he had crossed the river to accomplish."

"War and Peace: An International Conference on Battlefield Preservation and Interpretation" will be held November 16-18, 1988 at Gettysburg National Military Park. It is designed for government officials, battlefield administrators, and staff specialists who are responsible for various aspects of battlefield management and interpretation in nations throughout the world. Two unifying topics for the conference have been identified: battlefields are not islands—protecting and preserving the battlefield scene; and interpreting war and peace in the context of battlefields. For further information, contact Bruce Craig, Battlefield Preservation Conference, National Parks and Conservation Association, 1015 31st St. N.W., Washington, DC 20007.

A Georgia teenager may be the ultimate Civil War collector—and desecrator. James Bruce Meyer, 17, was jailed recently after police found at his home the remains of Confederate Army Major John David Walker who was killed in the second battle of Bull Run on August 30, 1862. The remains were stolen from a private cemetery near Augusta College.



The New Books compiled by Dick Clark

Levin, Alexandra Lee. "This Awful Drama," General Edwin Gray Lee, C.S.A., and his Family. NY: Vantage Press, 1987. \$14.95.

Owsley, Frank Lawrence. *The C.S.S. Florida: Her Building and Operations*. With a new introduction and revised bibliography by the author. University, AL: University of Alabama Press, 1987. Original of 1965.

Patterson, Gerald A. *Rebels from West Point*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1987, Bibliog. \$16.95.

Raus, Edmund J., Jr. *A Generation on the March: The Union Army at Gettysburg*. Lynchburg, VA: H.E. Howard, Inc., 1987. \$19.95. Sketches of the 345 Union regiments and battalions, biographical information for all 469 unit commanders; maps.

Roberts, Bobby Leon and Carl Moneyhon. *Portraits of Conflict: A Photographic History of Arkansas in the Civil War*. Fayetteville, AR: University of Arkansas Press, 1987. \$34.95; pbk \$19.95.

Ruddick, Rodger D., editor. *From the Hayfields to the Battlefields*. North Vernon, IN: The author, 1987. pbk \$12.75. Spencer township of Jennings Co., Indiana. Regimental histories of 6th, 12th, 22nd, 26th, 52nd, 72nd Indiana; identifies 191 from Spencer in the war.

Russell, William Howard. *My Diary North and South*. Edited by Eugene H. Berwanger. Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1987. \$29.95.

Sewell, Richard. *A House Divided: Sectionalism and Civil War*. Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988. \$29.95. pbk \$9.95.

Sword, Wiley. *Firepower from Abroad. The Confederate Enfield and the LeMat Revolver*. Lincoln, RI: Andrew Mowbray, Inc., 1987. \$16.00. In The Man at Arms Monograph series.

Sword, Wiley. *Sharpshooter: Hiram Berdan, His Famous Sharpshooters and their Sharps Rifles*. Lincoln, RI: Andrew Mowbray, Inc., 1987. \$16.00. In The Man at Arms Monograph series.

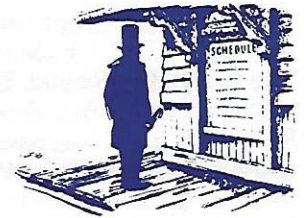
Taylor, Charles E. *The Signal and Secret Service of the Confederate States*. Harmans, MD: Toomey Press, 1986. 36 p. pbk \$5.00. Original of 1903.

Terrill, J. Newton. *The Monocacy Regiment, a Commemorative History of the 14th New Jersey Infantry in the Civil War, 1862-1865*. Edited by David G. Martin. Highstown, NJ: Longstreet House, 1987. \$30.00.

Van Horne, Thomas B. *History of the Army of the Cumberland*. Wilmington, NC: Broadfoot Publ. Co., 1988. 2 vols. With maps completely redrawn and clarified by Blake Magner. New introduction by Peter Cozzens. \$59.00. Original of 1875.

The Fourth Annual West Coast Civil War Conference will be held on November 5-6, in San Diego. Featured speakers include William C "Jack" Davis, Dr. William Hanchett, and Dr. Ronald Pietveld. The cost is \$88 for CWRT Associates members and \$110 for nonmembers. For additional information, contact CWRT Associates, P.O. Box 738, Little Rock, AK 72207.

BULLETIN BOARD



Future meetings

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

October 14: Lance Herdegen and William J.K. Beaudot on "The Charge on the Railroad Cut at Gettysburg."

November 11: Gordon Whitney on "Sherman's Lieutenants."

December 9: Karen Osborne & Ed Pierce on "Holiday Music of the Civil War."

January 13, 1989: Bruce Bazelon on "Gettysburg—After the Fight."

February 10: James M. McPherson on "Lincoln."

March 10: Jerry Russell on "Pea Ridge."

April 14: Charles Wesselhoeft on "The Army of the Tennessee."

May 4-7: Annual Battlefield Tour—Kennesaw Mountain, Andersonville.

May 12: Brig. Gen. Edwin Simmons, USMC (Ret.) on "The Assault on Fort Fisher."

June 9: John Y. Simon, topic to be announced.

New Members

William L. Butts, 2041 W. Farragut, Chicago, IL 60625 (312) 728-4671.

George M. Frey, 2133 W. Lunt Ave., Chicago, IL 60645 (312) 764-0516.

Seymour Greenspan, 3907 Cleveland, Skokie, IL 60076 (312) 674-9870.

Francis D. Kelch, 121 Blueberry Rd., Libertyville, IL 60048 (312) 362-8295.

Maury L. Schwartz, 8629 Trumbull, Skokie, IL 60076 (312) 673-8980.

Ed Bearss recently received the Captain Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr. Award of the Civil War Round Table of Greater Boston for his outstanding work in the preservation field and for his accomplishments as an author, lecturer and guide. In November, Benjamin F. Cooling, author of *Forts Henry and Donelson: Gateway to the Confederacy*, will receive the Douglas Southall Freeman Award for excellence in Civil War history from the Louisville Round Table.

A total of 53 acres of land might be added to the boundaries of Stones River in Tennessee. Plans include construction of a three-mile walking, jogging and biking trail linking Fortress Rosecrans, which is the largest earthen fort in the world, and the battlefield.

Our president, Bill Sullivan, will address the Northern Illinois Round Table on October 7. His topic is "William Clarke Quantrill—A Study in Scarlett."

That same evening fellow member Marshall Krolick will speak to the Salt Creek Round Table on Custer, Farnsworth and Merritt.