

THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

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January, 1989

Bruce Bazelon on Gettysburg—After the Fight

by Barbara Hughett

The Battle of Gettysburg is generally regarded as the turning point of the Civil War. Had Lee been successful in his invasion of the North, this battle could have had far-reaching consequences. Although Gettysburg did not turn out to be as strategically decisive as Vicksburg, or later battles, it remains the great battle of the war—the one most familiar to every one, the one which has inspired more historical investigation and more fiction and poetry than any other. It was the greatest single battle ever fought in North America, both in numbers involved and in casualties. And, of course, four months after the fighting, the battlefield was the site of one of Abraham Lincoln's most memorable addresses. What we have heard less about is what happened on the battlefield after the fighting. Between July 1-3, 1863, 100,000 men in blue and 75,000 men in gray fought it out, over an area of 28 square miles, using muskets, bayonets, pistols, swords, dirks, and 400 pieces of artillery. This resulted in one of the largest messes to clean up every experienced on any battlefield anywhere. Additionally, the battle and its aftermath had an extraordinary impact on the people who lived in the town of Gettysburg.



Bruce Bazelon

On January 13th, Bruce Bazelon will speak to The Civil War Round Table about "Gettysburg—After the Fight." He will talk about what it was like to be on the field after the last shots had been fired, what was involved in the massive clean-up operation, and the immediate and longer term effects this experience had on the inhabitants of Gettysburg and on the soldiers who fought in the battle. He will draw on the writings of the local people and soldiers who lived through those days. He will talk about a man by the name of Lightner who was cut off behind the lines as the battle began. When he managed to get back to his house, he discovered it was being used as a field hospital. He found his frightened family, sheltered in the back barn. They waited out the battle, only to find that, because of the stench, they could never live in their house again. When one of his children picked up a few relics and tried to sell them to tourists, the army apprehended him, charging him with selling government property.

Mr. Bazelon will discuss the creation of the national cemetery and what was involved in this process. Removing the dead from the temporary graves to the new national



477th Regular Meeting

Bruce Bazelon
on
Gettysburg—After the Fight

Friday, January 13, 1989

Quality Inn
Halsted and Madison
Cocktails at 5:30 p.m. Dinner at 6:30 p.m.
\$15.00 per person
Entree: Roast Turkey, Fish, or Fruit Plate



cemetery was not accomplished in one fell swoop. As Lincoln delivered his address in November of 1863, the dead were still being exhumed. Indeed, the bodies of fallen soldiers continued to be discovered and re-buried up until the 1880s. Mr. Bazelon will use several maps to illustrate the immensity of this project. He will summarize the evolution of the battlefield into the national park as it exists today.

The address Mr. Bazelon will deliver was written by J. Duncan Campbell, Director Emeritus of the State Museum of Pennsylvania and Consultant Director of the Smithsonian Institution in the area of Military History and Military Insignia. Because he has not been physically able to give an entire lecture, Mr. Campbell has asked Mr. Bazelon to give this talk for him, when requested.

Mr. Bazelon grew up in Cranston, Rhode Island and attended Boston University, majoring in Medieval history. He has a Master's degree in Museum History from Rutgers, and another Master's degree in Museum Administration from the Cooperstown graduate program. He was curator in the U.S. Army Quarter Masters' Museum in Fort Lee. He has served as Collections Manager and Curator in charge of Collections and Conservation for the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission in Harrisburg and currently is Acting Director of the Bureau of Historic Sites and Museums for that agency.

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 Dan Weinberg, 18 E. Chestnut St., Chicago, IL 60611.



Our president, **Bill Sullivan**, addressed the St. Louis Civil War Round Table on December 7th. His topic was "William Clarke Quantrill—A Study in Scarlett." On January 6th, fellow member James Vlazny will speak to the Northern Illinois Civil War Round Table on "VMI."

We recently learned of the death of fellow member Dr. Jan Tillisch. Our condolences are extended to his family.

The correct address for The Association for the Preservation of Civil War Sites (APCWS) is: P.O. Box 1862, Fredericksburg, VA 22402.

Battlefield Preservation Report

by Daniel J. Josephs

There have been a number of preservation issues facing the Antietam Battlefield Park recently. Last month this column reported on the recently passed federal legislation allowing the purchase of additional acreage by Antietam within the boundaries of the park.

Another matter involving Antietam is the 160 foot tower which G.S. Communications of Frederick, Maryland, wanted to install on Redd Hill for local cable television. According to Dennis Frye of the Save Historic Antietam Foundation (SHAF), such a tower would ruin the historic skyline of the Antietam battlefield area. As a result, when G.S. Communications applied to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to build this tower, SHAF organized a letter writing campaign to the FCC to implement environmental controls with respect to the application of G.S. Communications and the tower. As a result of this opposition, Mr. Frye reports that G.S. Communications withdrew its application, although it can resubmit it to the FCC at any time.

Another controversial issue involving the Antietam battlefield concerns the Grove Farm area. At the end of October, 1988, the Sharpsburg American Legion purchased from South Valley Corporation 5.4 acres of the historic Grove Farm area. According to Mr. Frye, the American Legion has plans to build a new Legion headquarters and a parking lot. This land does not involve the Grove farmhouse, but the Legion headquarters would be visible from the house. According to Mr. Frye this tract of land has not changed much since the time of the Civil War. It is the opinion of Mr. Frye and SHAF that the construction of a headquarters building and parking lot would severely impair the historic scenic area of Grove Farm.

At Harper's Ferry, West Virginia, a portion of the battle in 1862, which resulted in the Confederate capture of the Union force at Harper's Ferry, was fought on an area called School House Ridge. According to Dennis Frye, the Jefferson County, West Virginia commission set down the zoning of School House Ridge to be for "high density residential developments."

School House Ridge has not changed since the Civil War. It is contiguous to the Harper's Ferry National Park, but is not protected in any way from development, nor is it preserved by any scenic easements, according to Mr. Frye. Mr. Frye stated that local preservation groups have been working with the National Park Service and U.S. congressional representatives to include the 600 acre School House Ridge area as part of the Harper's Ferry National park. Those who support this attempt to preserve School House Ridge can indicate their support by writing to Donald Campbell, Superintendent at Harper's Ferry National Park, P.O. Box 65, Harper's Ferry, West Virginia 25425. The address of the Save Historic Antietam Foundation (SHAF) is P.O. Box 550, Sharpsburg, Maryland 21782.

A developer has purchased 50 acres of School House Ridge in order to build 180 houses. The location of this 50 acre tract is in the middle of the 1862 battlefield. The developer is a partnership, whose partners are Gene Capriotti and Charles Neidinger. According to Mr. Frye, bulldozing is currently being done on this tract, clearing away an orchard. There is scheduled, in the near future, a meeting involving, among others, individuals from the National Park and Conservation Association, U.S. Senators Byrd
(continued on page 4)

December Meeting

by Barbara Hughett

After coming through the crucible of the American Civil War, the country would never be the same. Even the celebration of Christmas, our most tradition laden holiday, would change dramatically. These changes began to take form during the Christmases of 1861-1864. Karen Osborne expanded on this theme on December 9th, when she spoke about "A Civil War Christmas" before 93 members and guests at the 476th regular meeting of The Civil War Round Table. Karen, a performing member of the First Brigade Band of Milwaukee and secretary of the Heritage Military Music Foundation, has addressed the Round Table on two previous occasions.

The war affected Christmas in a variety of ways. The circle of friends and family would never again be as intimate as it had been. Many circles were broken by those who went off to fight in the war, large numbers of whom would die in the conflict. "Those whose circle was not broken," Karen observed, often "found a suddenly widening family circle, as veterans moved west or left the country." "The face of Christmas changed," she added. "We went from having a largely religious holiday to having a folk festival. The country began to experience a Christmas that was nationalistic and patriotic in nature, and finally, unfortunately, Christmas was firmly placed on the road to commercialization, which we can hope has reached its zenith today." Though many people tried to cling to the past and hold back this tide of change, it was all in vain. The forces at work were simply too strong.

Our celebration of Christmas sprang from a conflict between the Puritans and Pilgrims who objected to Christmas observations, due largely to their distrust of anything which was being observed in Rome, and people of the more liberal colonies in the North and South who wanted to observe this holiday. In 1836, Alabama became the first state to acknowledge Christmas as a legal holiday. Until the outbreak of the war, only 17 states had followed suit. During the war years, 13 additional states legalized the holiday. Christmas trees came to this country in the 1830s with the influx of German immigrants. By the Civil War, if one had a tree at home, it was a small one that would stand on a table top. More frequently, there would be a community tree, placed in the largest church or house in town. Trimming it was a communal activity. People would come together to decorate the tree with miniature houses and animals, gilded nuts, fruits, and pieces of cards or calendars. Small and personal gifts, such as slippers, mittens, or perhaps a handmade wood carving, were wrapped and hung on the tree. Clad in red velvet with cotton batting, Father Christmas arrived, scissors in hand, to snip the gifts off the tree and distribute them. Holiday entertainment centered around family and friends.

"The Vacant Chair" was a popular sentimental ballad of the Civil War. As the years progressed, the number of vacant chairs around Christmas dinner tables increased. The suffering of the soldiers didn't all take place at the front. Thousands of men spent their Christmases in hospitals and prison camps, both North and South. At Libby Prison, if a man had \$12 on Christmas Day, he could get a chicken, or perhaps a dozen eggs. For \$3, he could purchase a handful of potatoes. Money smuggled in to supplement the sparse prison diet didn't go very far. Food shortages in the South made Christmas considerably bleaker there than in the North. In Richmond, a Christmas turkey, which cost

\$11 in 1862, was priced between \$50-\$100 in 1864.

The most famous gift of the Civil War Christmases was the one received by President Lincoln in 1864. On Christmas Day, Lincoln received a telegram from General Sherman, which said: "I beg to present you as a Christmas gift the city of Savannah." This gift, paid for in the lives of men—and of women and children—was a gift of hope. Perhaps the horrible nightmare would soon end. Mrs. John Logan wrote about her Christmas in 1864. She mentioned that, for the first time in three years, her community had a Christmas tree. And she talked about the gifts. Although the usual slippers and mittens were there, so were pinafores—and there were sleds and toys under the tree for the children. Karen called this an indication of "a clear separation." "Suddenly," she said, "we were headed down that 'keep up with the Joneses' road, and Christmas would never be simple again." Artist Thomas Nast and his contemporaries played a large part in this commercialization process by expanding the role of St. Nicholas, said to be a patron saint who loved and cared for children. Drawing on the characterization in Clement Moore's 1822 "A Visit From St. Nicholas," which was the first Christmas story or poem that did not mention the nativity of Christ, Nast began his series of engravings which led to the Santa we all recognize today.

A Union soldier on picket duty on Christmas Day, 1862, struck up a conversation with his Confederate counterpart. They exchanged gifts: coffee for the Rebel; corn and tobacco for the Yank. Writing about this, he said, "We were brothers, not foes, waving salutations of good will in the name of the Babe of Bethlehem.... We kept Christmas in our hearts and were the lighter for it, and our shivering bodies were not so cold." In closing, Karen said, "It seems to me, as we look back at these Christmas years, that the important thing to remember is not the changes that took place, but the fact that, as the season dawns again for all of us, when we keep Christmas in our hearts, we are the lighter for it."

A saddle that belonged to Gen. George A. Custer was auctioned for \$22,000 recently in San Francisco. A letter Custer wrote to President Ulysses S. Grant asking permission to visit him sold for \$52,250.

The 16th annual symposium of the Abraham Lincoln Association will be held on Sunday afternoon, February 12th, at the Old State Capitol in Springfield. Papers on Lincoln and his cabinet will be presented by John Nivens and Norman B. Ferris. Richard N. Current will comment. Pulitzer Prize winning cartoonist William Mauldin will be the featured speaker at the evening banquet.

Other events in Springfield, in observance of Lincoln's birthday, will include a program, sponsored by the Lincoln Home National Historic Site, at 9:30 a.m. on Sunday morning, with addresses by Dr. John Lattimer, who will explore the possibility that Lincoln suffered from Marfan's Syndrome, and Dr. Mark Plummer, who will speak on "Lincoln the Rail Splitter, The Election of 1860," and a meeting of The Lincoln Group of Illinois, to be held at the Historic Site Conference Center. On Saturday evening, February 11th, the Springfield Symphony will present Aaron Copeland's "A Lincoln Portrait." For further information on these events, contact the Abraham Lincoln Association, 217/782-4836, and the Lincoln Home National Historic Site, 217/492-4150.

The New Books

compiled by C. Robert Douglas



Stickles, Arndt M. *Simon Bolivar Buckner—Borderland Knight*. Wilmington, NC: Broadfoot Publ. Co. 1987. \$30.00. Original of 1940.

Still, William N., ed. *What Finer Tradition: The Memoirs of Thomas O. Selfridge Jr., Rear Admiral, U.S.N.* Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press. 1987. \$19.95. Original of 1924.

Utley, Robert M. *Cavalier in Buckskin: George Armstrong Custer and the Western Military Frontier*. University of Oklahoma Press. 1988. \$19.95.

Waite, Ernest (compiler). *History of the 19th Regiment Massachusetts Vol. Inf. 1861-1865*. Baltimore, MD: Butter and Blue. 1988. \$25.00. Original of 1906.

Walker, Peter F. *Vicksburg: A People at War*. Wilmington, NC: Broadfoot Publ. Co. 1987. \$25.00. Pbk. \$6.95. Original of 1960.

Wells, Edward L. *Hampton and His Cavalry in '64*. New introduction by A. Wilson Greene. Richmond, VA: Owens Civil War Books. 1988. \$35.00. Original of 1899.

Wise, Jennings C. *The Long Arm of Lee: The History of the Artillery of the Army of Northern Virginia, With a Brief Account of the Confederate Bureau of Ordnance*. New introduction by Gary Gallagher. Richmond, VA: Owens Civil War Books. 1988. 2 vols. \$59.00. Original of 1915.

Wise, Stephen R. *Lifeline of the Confederacy: Blockade Running During the Civil War*. University of South Carolina Press. 1988. \$24.95.

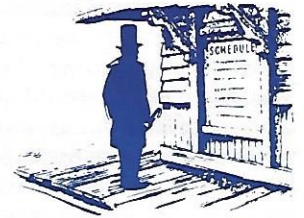
Woods, James M. *Rebellion and Realignment: Arkansas's Road to Secession*. Fayetteville, AR: The University of Arkansas Press. 1987. \$18.00.

Worthington, Glenn H. *Fighting for Time: The Battle That Saved Washington*. Introduction and additional material by Brian C. Pohanka. Shippensburg, PA: White Mane Publ. Co. 1988. \$19.95. Original of 1932.

Zorn, William A. *Hold at All Hazards, The Story of the 29th Alabama Infantry Regiment 1861-1865*. Jesup, GA: The Book Shelf. 1987. \$25.00.

According to *The Haversack*, the Dalton, Georgia CWRT newsletter, the Tennessee Monument Commission is planning to erect a large monument dedicated to all Tennessee natives who fought in the Civil War, "regardless of color, creed, or sex" or on which side they fought. They are funding this project with a unique offering of a tape containing interviews with the last two surviving Civil War veterans, former Confederate soldiers John Salling of Virginia (1842-1959) and Walter Washington Williams of Texas (1846-1959). These interviews were made shortly before the death of each veteran. Included on the tape is a newscast on the death of Williams, with a tribute from then Senator Lyndon B. Johnson and former Texas Governor Price Daniel. For a minimum \$10 contribution, this tape can be ordered. For a \$15 contribution, a deed for one square foot of land is included. For further information, contact the Tennessee Monument Commission, 944 Percy Warner Blvd., Nashville, TN 37205, (615) 352-4009.

BULLETIN BOARD



Future meetings

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

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 Under Grant."

May 4-7: Annual Battlefield Tour—The Atlanta Campaign and 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

Colleen T. Duffy, 432 W. Surf St., #306, Chicago, IL 60657, 312/472-3076.

William M. Grossman, 433 S. Clay St., Hinsdale, IL 60521, 312/325-2861.

Ted Saclarides, 1854 Old Willow Rd., Northfield, IL 60093, 312/501-3828.

William Stern, 1671 Lowell Lane, Lake Forest, IL 60045, 312/615-0555.

Change of Address

Ronald B. Johnson, 1340 East Indian Trail #C, Aurora, IL 60535.

Lee-Jackson Day will be celebrated by the Stuart-Mosby Historical Society with a memorial service at the Capitol Building in Richmond, Virginia at 10:30 a.m. on January 19. The Col. Harry W. Gilmor Camp, SCV, and the UDC will observe Lee-Jackson Day on January 21 with a ceremony at the Lee-Jackson monument in Baltimore.

(continued from page 2)

and Rockefeller from West Virginia and local West Virginia congressional representatives to discuss the future of School House Ridge, according to Mr. Frye. The National Park Service will do a presentation at this meeting showing the historical importance of School House Ridge.

Also at Harper's Ferry, there were plans to build a cable television tower on Bolivar Heights. The FCC has requested that C.R. Cable, Inc., who has been planning to build the tower, do an environmental assessment study, according to Mr. Frye. Mr. Frye stated that there are efforts being made to set up a meeting between the National Park Service and C.R. Cable, Inc. so that an agreement may be reached concerning the tower. According to Larry Wilingham of C.R. Cable, Inc., there will not be an adverse effect on the Harper's Ferry Battlefield Park caused by the proposed tower.