

# THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

Volume LII, Number 7

Chicago, Illinois

March 1992

## Herman Hattaway on "Teaching the Civil War at West Point"

by Barbara Hughett

The United States Military Academy at West Point, New York, was established in 1802 by an Act of Congress. Men who studied at the Academy, of course, played crucial roles in the American Civil War. Of the 1249 known living graduates when the war commenced, eighty-nine percent served in either the Union or Confederate armies. A modern-day cadet can be inspired by the impressive array of Civil War memorials which adorn the grounds and halls of West Point.

How is Civil War history taught today at the Academy? Herman Hattaway, who taught the course on "The Military History of the Civil War" as a visiting professor at West Point during the 1990-1991 academic year, will address that question when he speaks to The Civil War Round Table on March 13. His topic is "Teaching the Civil War at West Point."

Hattaway was born in New Orleans and received his B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. degrees from Louisiana State University. His doctoral work was done under the direction of noted historian T. Harry Williams, recipient of The Round Table's 1976 Nevins-Freeman Award. Currently professor of history at the University of Missouri-Kansas City, Hattaway has been on the faculty there since 1969. His first book, *General Stephen D. Lee*, won the 1976 Jefferson Davis Award. He is the co-author of *How the North Won* (1983) and *How the South Lost* (1986), and was a major contributor to the *Historical Times Encyclopedia of the Civil War*, as well



Herman Hattaway (r) receiving Meritorious Service Medal from Colonel Robert A. Doughty, head of the history department at West Point.



### 509th Regular Meeting



Herman Hattaway  
on  
"Teaching the Civil War at West Point"



Friday, March 13, 1992



Holiday Inn Mart Plaza  
350 North Orleans Street  
Buttons—15th floor

Cocktails at 5:30 p.m. Dinner at 6:30 p.m.  
\$17.50 per person

Entree: Chicken Oscar, Orange Roughy,  
or Fruit Plate



### A Reminder

Please make your reservation by Wednesday, March 11. Mail the enclosed postcard or call the book shop at (312) 944-3085.

If you are driving and coming from the south, turn left into the Mart Plaza lot just after crossing the river on Orleans. From the north, turn right from Orleans on Hubbard, left on Kingsbury, right on Kinzie, and left into the Mart Plaza lot. Parking is free.

as to both of William C. Davis's multi-volume photographic histories. He is currently editing, with Albert Castel, a new edition of Confederate guerrilla John McCorkle's memoir, *Three Years with Quantrill*.

Herman Hattaway spoke to The Round Table on two previous occasions: in March 1979 on "Stephen D. Lee" and in February 1985 on "How the North Won." Emulating his major professor Williams, who was Harmsworth Professor at Oxford University in England and subsequently had a Round Table circuit speech entitled "Teaching the Civil War at Oxford," Hattaway was inspired to prepare his "West Point" address.

## THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE



Founded December 3, 1940

357 West Chicago Avenue

Chicago, Illinois 60610

Phone: (312) 944-3085

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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, 357 W. Chicago Ave., Chicago, IL 60610.



**Filmmaker Steven Spielberg's production company** is shooting a two-hour pilot movie with a Civil War theme for ABC television. Titled "The Class of '61," the film dramatizes the impact of the war on two West Point roommates and their families—one from the North, one from the South—in the spring and summer of 1861.

## BATTLEFIELD PRESERVATION

### ☆ UPDATE ☆

by David Richert

Despite finding that the Civil War sites in the Shenandoah Valley are "its most important, most neglected, and most threatened resource," a year-long congressional study has recommended against establishing a new national park there. In making its recommendation, the study said that creating a new national park would be "complex, controversial, and expensive."

The \$100,000 study was commissioned by Congress in 1990 in response to heightened interest in preserving the Valley's rich Civil War heritage. Currently, there is only spotty protection of the fifteen battlefields studied. The report asserts that to properly interpret the great Valley campaigns—Stonewall Jackson in 1862 and Early and Sheridan in 1864—would require preservation of most of the fifteen battlefields. That could total 30,000 acres at staggering cost, the report suggests.

In announcing the report, Marilyn Nickels, chief of Interior Secretary Manual Lujan's American Battlefield Protection Program, said, "We have a real concern not to place the National Park Service in a position of assuming responsibility for areas for which we have neither the dollars nor the authorization to start a new park. We felt it was real important to be quite honest about the challenges the federal government would face. Nobody wants to set up for failure."

The report details the threat to the battlefields: residential and commercial growth, the loss of a quarter of a million acres of farmland in the last thirty years, and construction of Interstate 81 in the 1960s that degraded the integrity of ten of the fifteen battlefields. The study addresses several options that the federal government can take besides a full-fledged national park, such as federal preservation of one or two major battlefields, assistance to other groups in running a park system, encouraging preservation measures like zoning and easements, and confining federal action to interpreting the battlefields.

A. Wilson Greene, executive director of the Association for the Preservation of Civil War Sites (APCWS), laments the failure of the report to recommend a national park. "In public access and interpretation, no one does a better job than the National Park Service." He also asserts that the report is mistaken in its conclusion that the government would have to acquire thousands of acres. He advocates acquiring a small "core" of land at each battlefield, augmented by easements or restrictive zoning to preserve additional land. He cites as an example the 195 acres that the APCWS has just purchased at Fisher's Hill, which covers the key area of the battlefield and is sufficient for interpretation (see below).

**The Association for the Preservation of Civil War Sites (APCWS)** closed December 31, 1991 on 195 acres at the heart of Fisher's Hill battlefield in the Shenandoah Valley. The purchase preserves a key area of the September 22, 1864 battle, in which Union General Philip Sheridan's troops routed Confederates under Jubal Early. The half mile of the four-mile battle line that the APCWS owns is where the Confederate line crumbled.

The property will continue to be farmed, but the APCWS is planning for public access and interpretation. A dedication ceremony will be held April 4.

## ☞ FEBRUARY MEETING ☞

by Barbara Hughett

An early American humorist once observed, "It's not what folks don't know that hurts them, it's what they know that ain't so." This is especially true in the study of American Civil War history; many events of that period have yet to be critically examined. Early accounts, though sometimes self-serving and inaccurate, remain the standard for us today. One example of this centers on a critical event during the Battle of Chickamauga. On February 14, historian William Glenn Robertson spoke before 98 members and guests at the 508th regular meeting of The Civil War Round Table. His topic was "General Thomas J. Wood at Chickamauga: The Fatal Order Revisited."

The battle lines at Chickamauga were fairly stabilized by the morning of September 20, 1863, following initial fighting on the 18th and heavy and confused fighting on the 19th. Late that morning, Union General George Thomas sent a courier, Captain Sanford Kellogg, to General William Rosecrans to ask for reinforcements.

According to the traditional story, enroute to Rosecrans, Kellogg missed seeing an entire division of several thousand men and reported a gap in the Union line to the commanding general. Without consulting his meticulous chief of staff, James A. Garfield, who was "unavailable" at the time, Rosecrans asked his aide, Major Frank S. Bond, to write an order to General Thomas J. Wood. It read: "The general commanding directs that you close up on Reynolds as fast as possible and support him."

Wood, still smarting from an earlier rebuke from Rosecrans for not moving fast enough, immediately moved his division out of the line—in spite of strong indications that Confederates were opposite him in very great strength. Almost instantly, three of Confederate General James Longstreet's divisions crashed through the gap and drove three Northern divisions away from the field, making possible a Southern victory at Chickamauga.

Blame for the disaster has traditionally been cast on four individuals: Rosecrans, Kellogg, Bond, and Wood. Robertson offered an alternative hypothesis, based on his extensive research over the last ten years, to "redeem some of these villains."

He contends that Kellogg was sent first to General John M. Brannon, not Rosecrans. "Seeing the problem, the two men went and checked with General John F. Reynolds ... then Kellogg went to Rosecrans, telling him there would be a gap in the line." Garfield was present when Bond wrote what became known as "the fatal order," and even explained it to the courier. The explanation that Garfield was "unavailable" was contrived during the former general's 1880 presidential campaign, to prevent his opponents from suggesting any possible stain on the Republican candidate's war record.

The reported earlier rebuke of Wood by Rosecrans, according to Robertson, never occurred, and its genesis can be traced to erroneous dialogue in an 1880 book written by Henry Cist, a junior officer at the time of the incident, who was repeating "army gossip." Upon receiving "the fatal order," Robertson claimed, Wood was apprehensive, realizing how near the enemy might be, and sought the counsel of General Alexander McCook. McCook advised him that "the only thing for him to do was obey the order," and that he could face a court martial if he did otherwise. McCook

said, "Move out. I will backfill the position." Before that could happen, of course, Longstreet "filled the position." In Robertson's opinion, the Union loss at Chickamauga was the responsibility of Rosecrans and Chief of Staff Garfield.

In concluding his address, Robertson emphasized that "complex events like battles are seldom as simple as they are presented in books. It's easy to impugn the motives of commanders without checking deeply. It's easy to characterize commanders as buffoons or knaves and not really try to understand them. I believe this story proves that we need to probe a little more deeply ... to get at the truth and thereby achieve a better understanding of what went on. We need to do it with humanity and not merely look for villains and heroes; we need to see them as complex individuals acting under stress. Sometimes they made the wrong decisions. Their motives may not have been wrong, and they may have believed they were acting correctly. I believe many Civil War events need reevaluating. We have gone on too long relying on some self-serving memoirs of senior commanders. ... There's much to do and it's time to begin."

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**The Eleventh Annual Midwest Civil War Round Table Conference** will be held on April 24-26, in Fort Wayne, Indiana. Among the featured speakers will be Herman Hattaway, Mark E. Neely Jr., and Jerry Russell. For information, contact Marshall Brinkman at (219) 745-5517.

**The Fourth Annual Mid-Atlantic Regional Conference of Civil War Round Tables** will be held on April 25 in Philadelphia. Speakers will include Benjamin F. Cooling, Peter Cozzens, and Wiley Sword. For information, contact Mike Cavanaugh at (215) 636-1666.

**Lincoln and the Common Law** has recently been completed by Dan W. Bannister. The paperback book, which sells for \$12.95, is a by-product of Bannister's extensive volunteer service in drafting briefs of more than 300 Lincoln-related Illinois Supreme Court cases for the Lincoln Legals Project. For information, write Human Services Press, Box 2423, Springfield, Illinois 62705.

**The Houston Civil War Round Table** has announced that its 1992 Frank L. Vandiver Award of Merit will go to Robert W. Meinhard, professor emeritus at Winona State University in Minnesota, and battlefield preservation chairman of Civil War Round Table Associates. The award will be presented on May 21. Vandiver was the recipient of The Civil War Round Table's 1982 Nevins-Freeman Award.

**The National Park Service** is planning to build a prisoner-of-war museum, containing artifacts and information from all American wars, near Camp Sumter at the Andersonville Prison site in southern Georgia. The Friends of Andersonville will raise \$2.5 million needed for the 10,000-square-foot museum, and the federal government will provide \$4 million for park improvements and a new entrance.

**The nation's first veterans' hospital**, in Togus, Maine, has been in continuous operation since 1866. It was recently rededicated with the opening of a new wing and a Civil War weekend encampment attended by over 200 reenactors.

## The New Books

Compiled by C. Robert Douglas



- Roberts, Bobby and Carl Moneyhon. *Portraits of Conflict: A Photographic History of Louisiana in the Civil War*. University of Arkansas Press. 1990. \$45.00; pbk. \$30.00.
- Ropes, John C. *The Army Under Pope*. New introduction by William Blair. 4th volume—Campaigns of the Civil War. Broadfoot Publ. Co. 1989. \$25.00. Original of 1881.
- Schlicke, Carl P. *General George Wright: Guardian of the Pacific Coast*. University of Oklahoma Press. 1988. \$29.95.
- Simpson, Brooks D. *Let us Have Peace: Ulysses S. Grant and the Politics of War and Reconstruction*. University of North Carolina Press. 1991. \$34.95.
- Stackpole, Edward J. *The Fredericksburg Campaign*. Stackpole Press. 1991. Pbk. \$12.95. Original of 1957.

**Two new Civil War videos** featuring the Battle of Cedar Creek have been made in the past year. The first, produced by Video Vision of Hagerstown, Maryland, is entitled "The Battle of Cedar Creek." It was taped on location at the battlefield and Belle Grove Mansion, and features military historian and Cedar Creek expert Joseph W. A. Whitehorne. The 47-minute video includes footage from the 1990 reenactment, animated maps, dramatic vignettes, and period photographs and drawings. To order, send \$24.95 in check or money order to: Video Vision, 37 E. Washington St., Hagerstown, Maryland 21740. For VISA or Mastercard orders call (301) 791-3496. Please specify VHS or Beta.

The second video, produced by Lou Reda Productions, Inc. of Easton, Pennsylvania, is entitled "Bloody Shenandoah." The one hour video is narrated by Burgess Meredith and covers the entire Shenandoah Valley campaign of 1864. Lou Reda Productions made use of film footage of thousands of reenactors to recreate the dramatic battles that raged throughout the Valley in 1864. For information on obtaining a copy of "Bloody Shenandoah" contact: Lou Reda Productions, Inc., Box 68, 44 North Second Street, Easton, PA 18042, (215) 258-2957.

**The history of The Round Table, *The Civil War Round Table: Fifty Years of Scholarship and Fellowship***, by Barbara Hughett, is available for \$30 per copy. You may purchase the book at the February meeting or order it from Morningside Bookshop, 260 Oak Street, Dayton, Ohio 45401 (1-800-648-9710). Add \$2.50 for postage and handling.

### Schimmelfennig Boutique

In addition to The Round Table history, the following items are available at each monthly meeting:

Lapel pins \$3.00 each, two for \$5.00

Mugs \$2.00 each, two for \$3

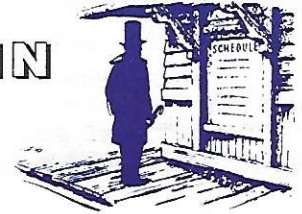
Meeting tapes \$7.00 each

Photos \$5.00 each

*Civil War Buff* Posters \$10.00 each

Proceeds from the sale of these items go to support the programs of The Civil War Round Table.

## BULLETIN BOARD



### FUTURE MEETINGS

Regular meetings are held at the Holiday Inn Mart Plaza, 350 N. Orleans (Buttons, 15th Floor), the second Friday in each month, except as noted.

*March 13:* Herman Hattaway on "Teaching the Civil War at West Point."

*April 10:* Dennis Frye on "Mosby vs. Sheridan in the Shenandoah."

*April 30-May 3:* Annual battlefield tour—Gettysburg.

*May 8:* Lawrence Hewitt on "Port Hudson: The Most Photographed Battlefield of the Civil War."

*June 12:* Steven Newton on "Joseph E. Johnston: Rationalizations, Ego, and Politics After the Battle of Seven Pines."

### New Members

Michael A. Buck, 7449 Willowood Court, 3NW, Orland Park, IL 60462, (708)532-2703

Donni Case, 2145 N. Clark, Chicago, IL 60614, (312) 348-4067

William G. Grice, 1603 Thacker Street, Des Plaines, IL 60016, (708) 824-1279

Alan E. Hoeweler, 10549 Reading Road, Cincinnati, OH 45421, (513) 563-2205

David Kupferman, 3023 Greenleaf Avenue, Wilmette, IL 60091, (708) 251-6250

Willie C. Marlatt, 207 Westminster, Lake Forest, IL 60045, (708) 234-6302

Chauncey Norton, 13373 Plaza Del Rio Boulevard, #333, Peoria, AZ 85381

Russell T. Paarlberg, 1226 E. 167th Street, South Holland, IL 60473, (708) 339-3367

John F. Scapin, 330 Romona Road, Wilmette, IL 60091, (708) 251-8590

Bob Silkett, 5945 Stewart Drive, #922, Clarendon Hills, IL 60514

Maggie Wildman, 1501 Oak, #501, Evanston, IL 60201, (708) 864-1987

### Changes of Address

Tom Kane, N1769 Maple Ridge Road, Lake Geneva, WI 53147

Dave Lynam, 2134 N. Hudson, #105, Chicago, IL 60614

**The Confederate Historical Association of Belgium (CHAB)** will celebrate its twentieth anniversary with a conference to be held on May 21-28 in Brussels. Round Table Founder Ralph G. Newman and Past President Brooks Davis will be featured speakers. Newman will speak about the world-wide impact of The Civil War Round Table on the study of the American Civil War and Abraham Lincoln. Davis's topic will be "Jefferson Davis and Abraham Lincoln as Commanders in Chief." For information about the conference, contact Brooks Davis at (312) 944-5082.