

THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

Volume LVII, Number 5

Chicago, Illinois

February 1997

Bruce Allardice on "Civil War Generals: Poltroons, Patriots, Politicians"

by Barbara Hughett

DURING THE Civil War, Confederate General Robert E. Lee was awed by the prowess of his untrained, under-equipped volunteer soldiers, remarking that they "could do anything . . . if properly led." However, at the war's beginning, both President Abraham Lincoln and Confederate President Jefferson Davis had problems finding effective leadership for their armies.

The prewar United States Army had only four generals, all of them too old for active service by 1861, and no other Americans had ever commanded as much as a thousand regular soldiers in battle. The armies that would fight the war would number hundreds of thousands of men. Where would the presidents find the leaders to command these vast hosts?

Unlike the situation in today's United States Army, there were no post-graduation advanced schools where officers could enhance their knowledge of tactics and strategy. There was no staff training at West Point, and no staff college after graduation. The art of being a chief of staff, a quartermaster, or an ordnance officer was something that was learned, if at all, "on the job." On February 21, Bruce Allardice will address The Round Table on the topic of "Civil War Generals: Poltroons, Patriots, Politicians."

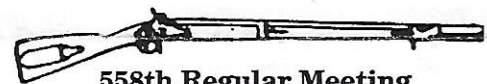
He will talk about the famous—Grant, Sherman, Sheridan, Lee, Jackson—and the not so famous generals of the armies. Included among these leaders were young, callow lieutenants fresh out of West Point; political big-wigs looking for a military rank to help them win future elections; retired army officers who never led more than fifty men in their lives; foreign adventurers; and politicians who were appointed only to keep the party affiliation of the army balanced.



Bruce Allardice

Some of these generals were alcoholics, some were cowards, many were incompetent, and still others venal. But, taken as a whole, the leaders of both armies impressed even hypercritical foreign observers as brave, earnest, hard-working, and able.

A lifelong resident of



558th Regular Meeting

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Bruce Allardice on "Civil War Generals:
Poltroons, Patriots, Politicians"

☆ ☆ ☆

Friday, February 21

(Please note this is the **THIRD** Friday of the month.)

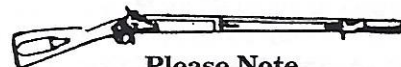
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Union League Club
65 West Jackson Boulevard

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

\$25 - The Civil War Round Table of Chicago members
\$30 - Nonmembers

Entree: Roast Cornish Game Hen with Wild
Rice or Catch of the Day



Please Note

Make your reservation by Wednesday, February 19, by calling Registrar Carole Le Claire at 847-698-1438. People who attend without having made a reservation will pay a \$5 walk-in charge. If you make a reservation and then find you cannot attend, please call to cancel or you will be billed for a dinner. **No last-minute orders for the Catch of the Day can be honored. The chef must have at least twenty-four hours notice.**

The Union League Club is located at the corner of Jackson Boulevard and Federal Street. Federal Street runs north and south between Dearborn and Clark Streets. Parking is available at the General Parking lot, just south of the Union League Club, at the rate of \$5 per car.

Chicago's northern suburbs, Bruce Allardice's interest in the Civil War began at an early age when, on visits to his grandparents, he was allowed to handle his great-grandfather's Civil War sword. He is a graduate of the University of Illinois and the University of Illinois School

(continued on page 3)

THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE



Founded December 3, 1940
601 South La Salle Building, Suite C-817
Chicago Illinois 60605
Phone: 847-698-1438

Officers

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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 Membership Committee, 601 South La Salle Building, Suite C-817, Chicago, Illinois 60605.

We are very saddened to announce the death of longtime member Joan Carlson on February 4. Joan, wife of former President Kurt Carlson, served several terms as Round Table Membership Registrar and on the Board of Trustees. We offer our deepest condolences to Kurt and his family.

BATTLEFIELD PRESERVATION

☆ UPDATE ☆

by David Richert

The Association for the Preservation of Civil War Sites successfully met a December 1 deadline to raise \$1 million toward purchase of the Brandy Station battlefield (see Battlefield Preservation Update, October 1996). Donations from more than 4,000 contributors totaling \$500,000 enabled APCWS to receive a matching \$500,000 from an anonymous donor. The Civil War Round Table of Chicago contributed \$3000; the funds were raised through the monthly book raffle and sale of items from the Schemmelfenning Boutique. The APCWS still needs another \$2.6 million to complete the purchase. It hopes to receive a donation from the Civil War Trust and will file an application seeking \$1 million in federal transportation funds through Virginia's ISTE (Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act) program.

According to the Milwaukee Civil War Round Table newsletter, the Mississippi State Gaming Commission turned down a developer's request for a license to build and operate a casino adjacent to the Big Black River battlefield (see November 1996 Battlefield Preservation Update). Milwaukee Round Table member Terry Frazier reports the official reason for the decision was that the site would destroy the existing casinos in Vicksburg by siphoning off the business that comes from Jackson and points east. The commission left open the possibility of development, noting that if the existing casinos "do not complete their land-based development by the time their licenses come up for renewal in 1998 they may lose their licenses and the Big Black River site may be approved for a new casino."

The newly updated and expanded edition of *The Civil War Trust's Official Guide to the Civil War Discovery Trail* is now available for \$11.95 per copy. Organized state by state, the 272-page *Guide* provides a description of each Civil War site with detailed, easy-to-follow descriptions and explanations of all pertinent information. The book includes maps, photographs, and an Introduction by Pulitzer Prize-winning historian James M. McPherson. The Civil War Trust, based in Washington, D.C., is a private, non-profit organization whose mission is to promote the appreciation and stewardship of our nation's heritage through the preservation of historic Civil War battlefields. **To order a copy of this book, call toll-free: 1-800-CWTRAIL.**

Special Executive Committee Meeting

President Larry Gibbs has announced a meeting of the Executive Committee of The Civil War Round Table of Chicago on Saturday, February 22, at 10:00 a.m., at Notre Dame High School in Niles. All current officers and committee chairs and all former presidents are urged to attend.

☞ JANUARY MEETING ☞

by Larry Gibbs

On January 10, at the 557th regular meeting of The Civil War Round Table, 99 members and guests heard fellow member Kurt Carlson give an interesting, stimulating speech titled "Patrick Cleburne: What Makes a General Great?" A lawyer by trade, Carlson is a former Round Table president and longtime Civil War enthusiast. Concluding that Patrick Cleburne was the best division commander in the Civil War, Carlson analyzed his career to ascertain the qualities that made him a great leader of soldiers.

Major General Patrick Cleburne, born in Ireland in 1828, came to the U.S. at the age of 21. Moving to Helena, Arkansas, he became a lawyer in 1856. After Arkansas's secession, Cleburne was elected colonel of his regiment. Promoted to brigadier general in 1862, he received high praise for his conduct at Shiloh (April 6-7, 1862). After being wounded in the jaw during the Battle of Richmond, Kentucky (August 30, 1862) and twice wounded at Perryville (October 8, 1862), Cleburne exhibited such leadership that he was promoted to major general in the Army of Tennessee in November, 1862. Carlson stated that "Cleburne always claimed that credit for his success belonged to his men, not to him." He aided in the Rebel victory at Chickamauga (September 19-20, 1863) and distinguished himself at Missionary Ridge and Ringgold Gap during the Battle of Chattanooga (November 25, 1863).

Carlson addressed the reasons why men would follow Cleburne blindly into battle with ferocious determination. "Cleburne led by example," Carlson explained. "He worked harder than anyone else and he was always in the front of the battle line. He went a step farther than any other officer. For example, he abstained from alcohol because he thought that the effects might impair his judgment on the battlefield. Patrick Cleburne was always in charge of his division; he was a great disciplinarian. He demanded and received cleanliness and unquestioned obedience from his soldiers. He had an extensive punishment and reward system which worked well. Cleburne emphasized that none of his men would be embarrassed on or off the battlefield."

Stressing the importance of preparedness for Cleburne, the military leader, Carlson said that Cleburne read everything that would help him become a better leader. He read books on strategy, geography, and engineering. In order to increase expertise for his troops, he demanded that they go to school. In a wartime situation lives must inevitably be lost during battle, but Carlson claimed that "Cleburne was careful with the lives of his soldiers; he would not waste lives. Because his troops were trained and conditioned properly, Cleburne's coordinated assaults were hard-hitting and irresistible." His qualities of superior discipline, respect, preparation, and leading by example, earned Cleburne the sobriquet "Stonewall Jackson of the West" in late 1863.

Despite great personal success Cleburne was concerned about the chances for eventual success of the Confederacy. The mark of a good military leader is to enhance the chance for victory in any possible manner. In January, 1864, Cleburne proposed that the Confederacy free all slaves immediately, placing them in Rebel armies.

He reasoned that an additional 700,000 slaves in Confederate armies would even the battlefield numbers with Union armies. "Taking this idea to its logical conclusion," Carlson said, "Cleburne indicated that there could never be slavery again. Taking this proposal to his superiors could mean court-martial. The South, concluded Cleburne, had to use slaves to win the Civil War. Even ten percent (70,000) of the slaves might have turned the tide for the Confederacy." Cleburne was not for abolition of slavery on moral grounds; he was simply devoted to the Confederate cause.

Since he was not promoted again, Cleburne's controversial proposal probably did hurt his chances for future promotions. His proposal to use slaves as Rebel soldiers was not met with enthusiastic endorsement by Confederate officers and leaders. General Braxton Bragg and Confederate President Jefferson Davis rejected it summarily. History has proven that Cleburne was correct; the South had no chance except to give the slaves the chance to fight the Yankees. Eventually, on March 13, 1865, the Confederate Congress passed a bill for development of Confederate black troops without emancipation. The first black Rebel company was formed in Richmond two weeks before General Robert E. Lee surrendered at Appomattox Court House (April 9, 1865). This symbolic conclusion to the devastating conflict proved Cleburne to be accurate. However, Cleburne did not live to see the final Confederate defeat. He was killed during a frontal attack at the Battle of Franklin, Tennessee (November 30, 1864).

BRUCE ALLARDICE (continued from page 1)

of Law. He currently works for a company that publishes legal information for lawyers.

Allardice, who serves as secretary and inspector general (or "quizmaster") of The Civil War Round Table of Chicago, is the author of numerous articles in such magazines as *Civil War Times Illustrated*, *Civil War*, and the *West Tennessee Historical Society Papers*. He has been a member of The Round Table for eight years.

His first book, *More Generals in Gray* (1995), has been called "an indispensable reference work" by noted historian Gary W. Gallagher, and has been nominated for numerous literary awards. It was an alternate selection of the History Book Club. Renowned scholar James I. Robertson, Jr. said this of *More Generals in Gray* in a review in the *Richmond Times Dispatch*: "Many volumes in Civil War history are touted as 'a basic reference work.' Few deserve such distinction. This is one of them."

Bruce Allardice's current projects include research he is doing for a book on Confederate army colonels. He is also preparing to write a biography of Civil War governor of Missouri, Thomas C. Reynolds.

Due to a mix up, the wrong parking validation stickers were used at the January meeting, resulting in additional charges for some members. If you paid more than \$5 for parking, please see Treasurer Frank Patton at the February meeting, or call President Larry Gibbs at 708-957-4662, to obtain a refund. The Round Table apologizes for the inconvenience.

The New Books

Compiled by C. Robert Douglas



- Dejardins, Thomas A. *Stand Firm. Ye Boys From Maine — The 20th Maine and the Gettysburg Campaign.* Thomas Publications. 1996. \$28.
- Dunn, Craig L. *Iron Men, Iron Will — The Nineteenth Indiana Regiment of the Iron Brigade.* Guild Press of Indiana. 1995. \$29.95.
- Folsom, James M. *Heroes and Martyrs of Georgia.* Butternut and Blue. 1995. \$30. Original of 1865.
- Frassanito, William A. *Early Photography at Gettysburg.* Thomas Publications. 1995. \$49.95.
- Frazier, Donald S. *Blood and Treasure: Confederate Empire in the Southwest.* Texas A & M Press. 1995. \$29.95.
- Gallagher, Gary W. *Lee — The Soldier.* U. of Nebraska Press. 1996., \$45.
- Geier, Clarence R., Jr. and Susan E. Winter, eds. *Look to the Earth: Historical Archaeology and the American Civil War.* U. of Tennessee Press. 1994. \$35.
- Hallock, Judith L. *General James Longstreet in the West: A Monumental Failure.* Ryan Place Publishers Inc. 1995. Pbk. \$11.95.
- Hauptmann, Laurence M. *Between Two Fires: American Indians in the Civil War.* The Free Press. 1995. \$25.
- Jordan, Thomas and J.P. Pryon. *The Campaigns of Lt. Gen. N.B. Forrest and of Forrest's Cavalry.* Morningside Bookshop. 1995. \$45. Original of 1868.
- Keegan, John. *Fields of Battle — The Wars for North America.* Alfred A. Knopf. 1995. \$30.
- Lash, Gary. *The Gibraltar Brigade on East Cemetery Hill — Gettysburg, July 2, 1863 — Fifty Years of Controversy.* Butternut and Blue. 1995. \$30.
- McPherson, James M. "We Cannot Escape History" — *Lincoln and The Last Best Hope of Earth.* U. of Illinois Press. 1995. \$27.95.
- Musicant, Ivan. *Divided Waters: The Naval History of the Civil War.* Harper Collins. 1995. \$30.
- Goodrich, Thomas. *Guerrilla Warfare on the Western Border, 1861-1865.* Indiana U. Press. 1995. \$24.95.
- Grimsley, Mark, *The Hard Hand of War: Union Military Policy Toward Southern Civilians, 1861-1865.* Cambridge, U. Press. 1995. \$29.95.

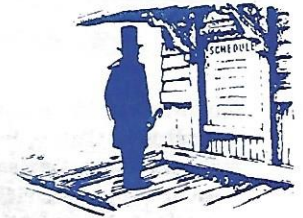
Schimmelfennig Boutique

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 monthly meeting or order it from Morningside Bookshop, 260 Oak Street, Dayton, Ohio 45401 (1-800-648-9710). Add \$2.50 for postage and handling.

In addition to The Round Table history and *The Continuing Civil War*, the essays from the Fiftieth Anniversary Proceedings, the following items are available at each monthly meeting: Lapel pins, Mugs, Meeting Tapes, Civil War Buff posters and T-Shirts, CWRT T-shirts, polos, and sweatshirts.

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 Union League Club, 65 West Jackson Boulevard, the second Friday in each month, except as noted.

February 21: Bruce Allardice on "Civil War Generals: Poltroons, Patriots, Politicians" (*This is the THIRD Friday.*)

March 14: Dale K. Phillips on "Benjamin Butler and the Occupation of New Orleans"

April 11: David Ruth on "The Army of Northern Virginia Matures: The Peninsular Campaign of 1862"

April 30–May 4: Annual Battlefield Tour: Richmond

May 9: William J. Cooper on "Jefferson Davis"

June 13: Mark Grimsley on "Sherman's March to the Sea"

NEW MEMBERS

Patrick J. Brennan, 3950 Madison, Skokie, IL 60076, 847-673-1855

Alan J. Spitz, 70 W. Burton Place, #2307, Chicago, IL 60610, 312-951-0349

Changes of Address

Margaret H. April, 504 W. Wellington Avenue, Chicago, IL 60657-5421

Daniel Josephs, 1175 S. Euclid Avenue, Oak Park, IL 60304

Abraham Lincoln's Birthday Events in Springfield

The Twenty-Fourth Annual Abraham Lincoln Symposium will be held on Wednesday, February 12, at the Old State Capitol. The theme this year is "Abraham Lincoln and American Law." A CD-ROM presentation of *The Lincoln Legal Papers: A Documentary History of the Law Practice of Abraham Lincoln, 1836-1861* will take place at 10:30 a.m. The symposium, which starts at 1:00 p.m., will feature papers presented by Paul D. Carrington, William D. Beard, and Mark E. Steiner, as well as a panel discussion with Director Cullom Davis and members of *The Lincoln Legal Papers* staff. The symposium is free of charge.

The George L. Painter Lincoln Lectures will be held at the Visitor Center at the Lincoln Home National Historic Site, on February 12, beginning at 9:30 a.m. An autographing session (at 8:15 a.m.) will precede the program. Lectures will be given by artist Lloyd Ostendorf and Professor Roger Fischer. The lectures are free of charge. For information, call 217-492-4241, extension 241.

Noted *New York Times* writer and author of several books on Lincoln and Civil War topics, Herbert Mitgang will address the annual banquet of the Abraham Lincoln Association in the ballroom of the Renaissance Springfield Hotel that evening. Cocktails begin at 6:00 p.m. and dinner at 7:00 p.m. The charge is \$40 per person. For information, call 217-753-7123.