

THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

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April 1997

David Ruth on "The Army of Northern Virginia: A Study in Leadership and Indoctrination"

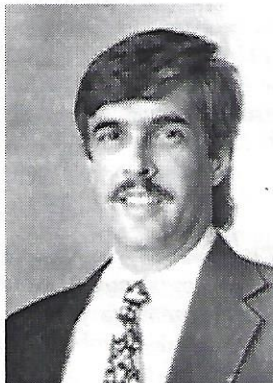
by Barbara Hughett

IN THE SPRING OF 1862, Southerners had little reason for rejoicing. A string of disasters had befallen the Confederacy on nearly all points of the compass. Forts were particularly vulnerable. Forts Henry and Donelson fell in February; Forts Pulaski and Macon in April. Battles at Nashville, Pea Ridge, and Shiloh were stunning defeats and the fall of New Orleans closed the South's largest port. Just a few short miles from the Confederate capital, Union General George B. McClellan's Army of the Potomac was positioned to administer a decisive blow.

In an effort to turn the tide, General Joseph Johnston's defenders of Richmond assaulted the Federal lines at Seven Pines on May 31. A two-day engagement, described as one of the South's most mismanaged battles, resulted in the wounding of Joe Johnston and the transfer of the command to General Robert E. Lee.

On his new horse, Traveller, the fifty-five year old Lee rode to field headquarters, where he issued to the troops in front of his country's besieged capital a message announcing that he had taken command. For the first time, the troops heard themselves addressed not as "the Potomac Army," or "the Army of the North," or "the Army of Richmond," but as "the Army of Northern Virginia." They were never to have another title, and never to have another commander but the one who signed himself that day: "R.E. Lee, General."

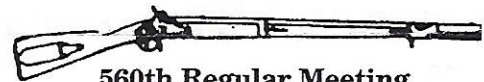
Lee's challenge was immediate and time management was critical. He had to drive McClellan from Richmond's doorsteps before heavy siege guns were brought up to batter the city into submission. But was the army and its commander prepared to take the offensive?



David Ruth

Historian David Ruth has studied the actions of the Army of Northern Virginia during the thirty-day period between June 1 and July 1, 1862. The topic of his address to The Round Table on April 11 will be "The Army of Northern Virginia: A Study in Leadership and Indoctrination."

Ruth's presentation will initially examine the leadership techniques Lee employed



560th Regular Meeting

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David Ruth on "The Army of Northern Virginia: A Study in Leadership and Indoctrination"

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Friday, April 11

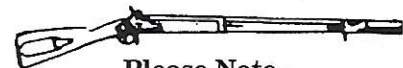
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Union League Club
65 West Jackson Boulevard

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

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

Entree: Grilled Minute Sirloin Steak
or Catch of the Day



Please Note

Make your reservation by Wednesday, April 9, 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.

prior to the commencement of the Seven Days Campaign to instill morale, discipline, and order in the loose-knit organization of armies and divisions that made up his newly-named army. The second phase of the presentation will explore Lee's emergence in his first major combat role.

(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

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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.

Rev. Andrew Greeley, author of *Irish Lace*, a mystery in which Camp Douglas and Civil War Chicago plays a prominent role, will address the annual luncheon of the **Stephen A. Douglas Association** on Saturday, April 12. The luncheon, which begins at 12:30 p.m., will be held at the Prairie Restaurant in the Hyatt on Printers Row, 500 South Dearborn Street. The cost is \$25 per person. The luncheon will be preceded by ceremonies at the Douglas Tomb, 636 East 35th Street. For further information, or to make a reservation, contact David Richert, 6959A North Hamilton Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60645. Call 312-944-5082 (Brooks Davis). Please make checks payable to the Stephen A. Douglas Association.

Former President Mary Abroe was elected to the board of trustees of the Association for the Preservation of Civil War Sites in January. Currently, she is chairing the association's Education/Outreach Committee. The APCWS is a national membership organization devoted to saving Civil War sites through fee acquisition and other means.

The Grant Monument Association (GMA) is co-sponsoring a "Grant's Tomb Centennial Celebration" on Sunday, April 27, in New York City. This date marks the centennial of the dedication of Grant's Tomb and the 175th anniversary of the birth of Ulysses S. Grant.

In 1897, this date was declared a full public holiday in New York and President William McKinley dedicated Grant's Tomb following a parade with 60,000 marchers which was witnessed by over one million spectators.

Keeping in the spirit of that celebration, this year's formal ceremony, expected to begin at 3 p.m. and last one hour, will follow a parade up Manhattan's Riverside Drive from West 79th Street to Grant's Tomb at 122nd Street. The parade will begin at 2 p.m. For information, call Frank Scaturro, president of the GMA, at 215-417-4915.

The July 1997 issue of *America's Civil War* magazine will feature an article by Round Table secretary and quizmaster Bruce Allardice. Entitled "Curious Encounter at Blair's Landing," the article relates the story of one of the most unusual battles of the Civil War—an attack by Confederate cavalry on a Union ironclad.

Former President Brooks Davis will serve as **tour guide** for a trip to The Lincoln Museum in Fort Wayne, Indiana, sponsored by Cathedral Arts in conjunction with the Northwestern University Institute for Learning in Retirement class, "Liberty and Union," on May 19-20. The group will leave at 9 a.m. on Monday, May 19. The cost is \$145 per person (excluding meals), double or single room, and includes a tax-deductible contribution of \$25 to Cathedral Arts. For additional information, call Brooks at 312-944-5082.

The January 1997 issue of *The Civil War Round Table Digest* reports that, according to the United States Postal Service, the Civil War postage stamps, which first appeared in June 1995, rank number five among the all-time best sellers among all the U.S. commemorative stamps that have been issued.

A new preservation organization, the **Kernstown Battlefield Association**, has been formed to preserve and protect the Kernstown battlefield in the Shenandoah Valley. For information, write the Association at 104 North Braddock Street, Winchester, Virginia 22601.

☪ MARCH MEETING ☪

by Larry Gibbs

On March 14, at the 559th regular meeting of The Civil War Round Table, 91 members and guests heard Dale Phillips's interesting and enlightening discussion of "Ben Butler and the Occupation of New Orleans." Currently, Phillips is manager of the Acadian Units of Jean Lafitte National Historical Park in Louisiana. His speech gave a different and controversial perspective to a very colorful and interesting personality, General Benjamin Butler.

By far the largest Confederate city, New Orleans had a population of 170,000 in 1861. Located 90 miles from the Gulf of Mexico, New Orleans was thought to be protected by Forts Jackson and St. Phillip, 65 miles south of the city. On April 24-25, 1862, Fleet Admiral David Farragut and 17 warships easily bypassed these forts, progressing toward New Orleans. On April 29, Farragut and the Union fleet captured the Crescent City. Confederate strategists never considered the possibility of a Union attack on the city from the Gulf of Mexico. The early conquest of New Orleans was one of the unsung turning points of the war.

Two days after Farragut took New Orleans, General Ben Butler and his army of 15,000 entered the city, taking control of the customs house. "Butler was faced with the most difficult situation that any Union officer faced in the entire Civil War," Phillips strongly asserted. In occupying New Orleans, Butler administered with efficient but uncompromising control from May to December of 1862.

Butler handled some situations with a controversial flair. He ordered the execution of William Mumford, who raised a Confederate flag over the U.S. Mint. Rebel-supporting women of New Orleans wore Confederate symbols on dresses and swore at Union soldiers. After a chamber pot was emptied on Admiral Farragut, a chagrined Butler issued his infamous Woman Order. This order stated that any woman who insulted a Union officer was plying her "vocation," implying prostitution. Phillips opined, "This order, although highly controversial, saved many lives. Insults from New Orleans ladies came to an abrupt halt. Before this edict, bloody street fights were a distinct possibility. This action was a great success." However, Butler was called a "hideous, cross-eyed beast" by Southern supporters. Soon he fired the New Orleans mayor and declared martial law.

After the Woman Order, Butler was nicknamed "The Beast." Keeping a sword and silverware from the David Twiggs mansion, Butler also earned the sobriquet of "Spoons." However, Phillips pointed out that Ben Butler was a very able and efficient administrator over this occupied city. Because the unemployment rate in New Orleans was high, Butler began an extensive public works program and initiated a program to feed the poor with Union food supplies. At the beginning of the occupation, only 30 days worth of food was available. Butler allowed supply lines to remain open, thereby preventing possible mass starvation. "He even used several thousand dollars of his own money to help the citizens," added Phillips. By allowing open supply lines, he was ripe for criticism because of a great deal of contraband, but no New Orleans citizen starved to death during the occupation.

Phillips indicated that "the Confederates counted

on an ally to destroy the Union army—yellow fever." General Butler employed a number of workers to clean up the city. They dredged canals, removed carcasses, and filled up holes. The result was that only two cases of yellow fever developed and no Union soldiers died of this disease.

"Ben Butler did not personally profit from wartime speculation, but his brother Andrew did," proclaimed Phillips. "The reputation of Ben Butler was tainted by his brother's obvious corruption." In December of 1862, Butler made his worst mistake. Suspecting that Confederate gold was funneled into the Dutch consulate in New Orleans, Butler had the consulate seized. Abraham Lincoln feared European intervention in the war; in seizing a foreign consulate, Butler went too far. Butler was relieved and left the city, expressing no personal animosity to the people. Although Ben Butler has been severely criticized for his military career, Phillips explained that his capable administration of occupied New Orleans should be deemed a success.

DAVID RUTH (continued from page 1)

During the Seven Days Campaign, the Confederate army commander displayed exceptional qualities that would characterize the remainder of his military career. Conversely, the army demonstrated several organizational defects that led to confusion and excessive casualties. In most cases, Lee or his most able subordinates surveyed the problem and took or suggested corrective action to prevent repetition. But in some matters, the difficulties that surfaced during the Seven Days would plague Lee throughout the entire war.

A native of Pennsylvania, David Ruth received his B. A. in history from Virginia Tech. His National Park Service career began under the direction of Bob Krick at Fredericksburg in 1973, and since then has included stops at Manassas and Fort Sumter. In 1991, he transferred to Richmond, where he currently is serving as Acting Superintendent. He has written several articles and essays and served as an on-camera commentator for the Fort Sumter segment of the Arts & Entertainment network's "Civil War Journal" television series.

The eleventh annual Deep Delta Civil War Symposium will take place on May 30-31 at Southeastern Louisiana University in Hammond, Louisiana. This year's speakers include James McPherson, Ed Bearss, Charles Roland, Dale Phillips, Michael Fellman, Terry Winschel, Reid Mitchell, and Andy Trudeau. For further information, call Sam Hyde at 504-549-2109. (Larry Hewitt, current member of our Round Table, served as the coordinator of the Deep Delta Symposium from 1988-1992.)

The Board of Trustees of the Lincoln Prize of Gettysburg College have announced that the 1997 Lincoln Prize will be awarded to renowned Lincoln and Civil War scholar and Pulitzer Prize-winning author Don E. Fehrenbacher. He has been named the 1997 Lincoln Prize Laureate for his lifetime of achievement. Because, due to illness, Dr. Fehrenbacher would be unable to attend, the annual banquet will not be held.

The New Books

Compiled by C. Robert Douglas



- McPherson, James M. *Drawn With the Sword: Reflections on the American Civil War*. Oxford U. Press. 1996. \$25.
- Moore, Jerrold Northrop. *General Lucius Bellinger Northrop and the Subsistence Bureau of the Southern Army*. White Mane Publ. Co. 1996. \$24.95.
- Nesbitt, Mark. *Ghosts of Gettysburg III: Spirits, Apparitions and Haunted Places of the Battlefield*. Thomas Publications 1995. Pbk. \$4.95.
- Nesbitt, Mark. *Through Blood and Fire — Selected Civil War Papers of Major General Joshua Chamberlain*. Stackpole Books. 1995. \$19.95.
- Pease, William H. and Jane H. Pease. *James Louis Petigru: Southern Conservative, Southern Dissenter*. U. of Georgia Press. 1995. \$35.
- Potter, David M. *Lincoln and His Party in the Secession Crisis*. LSU Press. 1995. Pbk. \$16.95. Original of 1942.
- Renehan, Edward J. Jr. *The Secret Six: The True Tale of the Men Who Conspired with John Brown*. Crown Publishers. 1995. \$25.
- Ridley, Bromfield L. *Battles and Sketches of the Army of Tennessee*. Morningside Bookshop. 1995. \$47.50. Original of 1906.
- Roland, Charles P. *Reflections on Lee — A Historian's Assessment*. Stackpole Books. 1995. \$16.95.
- Schneller, Robert J., Jr. *A Quest for Glory: A Biography of Rear Admiral John A. Dahlgren*. Naval Institute Press. 1995. \$35.
- Sutherland, Daniel E. *Season of War — The Ordeal of a Confederate Community, 1861-1865*. The Free Press. 1995. \$30.
- Tanner, Robert C. *Stonewall in the Valley*. Stackpole Books. 1996. \$34.95. Original of 1976.
- Taylor, John. *Bloody Valverde: A Civil War Battle on the Rio Grande, February 12, 1862*. U. of New Mexico Press. 1995. \$29.95.
- Toplin, Robert B. *Ken Burns's The Civil War — Historians Respond*. Oxford University Press. 1996. \$24.
- Tribble, Byrd B. *Benjamin Cason Rawlings—First Volunteer for the South*. Butternut and Blue. 1996. \$25.

(continued in column 2)

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.
- April 11: David Ruth on "The Army of Northern Virginia: A Study in Leadership and Indoctrination"
- 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

- John Vield, 680 Green Bay Road #104, Winnetka, IL 60093, 847-501-3286
- John Wilharm III, 1612 N. Sedgwick, Chicago, IL 60614, 312-951-8739

Changes of Address

- Marshall Krolick, 621 Michelline Lane, Northbrook, IL 60062, 847-498-3126
- Joseph Wisehart, 1237 Karyn Lane, Grayslake, IL 60030

BOOKS (continued)

- Trout, Robert J. *With Pen and Saber: The Letters and Diaries of J.E. B. Stuart's Staff Officers*. Stackpole Books. 1995. \$24.95.
- Tucker, Philip T. *A Bridge of No Return. Burnside's Bridge at Antietam: The Thermopylae of the Civil War*. Sgt. Kirkland's Museum & Historical Society, Inc. 1995. \$32.95.
- Tucker, Philip T. *"God Have Mercy on Us" From Vicksburg to Fort Blakely: The History of the "Old Guard", the First Missouri Brigade, C.S.A.* McFarland Publ. Co. 1995. \$32.95.
- Tucker, Philip T., ed. *The History of the Irish Brigade. A Collection of Historical Essays*. Sgt. Kirkland's Museum & Historical Society, Inc. 1995. Pbk. \$23.
- Vandiver, Frank E. *Civil War Battlefields and Landmarks — With Official National Park Service Maps for Each Site*. Random House. 1996. \$25.
- Weland, Gerald. *O.O. Howard—Union General*. McFarland & Co., Inc. 1995. \$26.50.
- Whitehouse, Hugh L., ed. *Letters From The Iron Brigade — George Washington Partridge, Jr., 1839-1863; Civil War Letters to His Sister*. Guild Press of Indiana. 1995. \$18.95.
- Williams, T. Harry. *Hayes of the 23rd, The Civil War Volunteer Officer*. U. of Nebraska Press. 1994. Pbk. \$13.95. Original of 1965.
- Williams, Frank J. and William D. Pederson, eds. *Abraham Lincoln: Contemporary. An American Legacy*. Savas & Woodbury Publishers. 1995. \$24.95.
- Woodworth, Steven E. *Davis and Lee at War*. U. Press of Kansas. 1995. \$29.95.
- Wright, Mike. *City Under Siege—Richmond in the Civil War*. Madison Books. 1995. \$24.95.