

THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

Volume LVIII, Number 9

Chicago, Illinois

May 1998

Nathaniel Cheairs Hughes, Jr., on "Forty Years on the Firing Line"

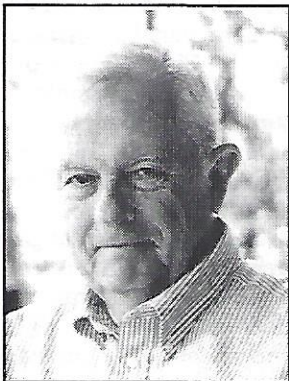
by Barbara Hughett

The Civil War has been called "the single most dramatic and crucial experience in American history" by a leading scholar of the period. Millions of words have been written about the conflict; various aspects of it, including its causes, are still being debated. Nathaniel Cheairs Hughes, Jr., the author of several books on the war, will present a retrospective of his career on May 8, when he addresses The Round Table. He has titled his presentation, "Forty Years on the Firing Line."

A native of Chattanooga, Tennessee (where he still resides), Nat Hughes received his B.A. from Yale University and his M.A. and Ph.D. in American History from the University of North Carolina. He first began serious Civil War research in the fall of 1955 and has continued to the present, producing over a dozen books. In his presentation, he will recount some of the adventures and misadventures of his career and reflect upon some of the individuals who aided him.

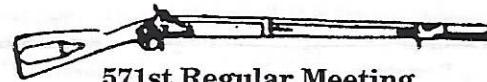
He has seen changes in the writing (and writers) of Civil war history and feels that, although today's researcher enjoys great advantages, great problems persist. The following are some questions he will address: What does confront the modern historian? Why did Hughes chose to write about Belmont and Bentonville? What are his thoughts about the Civil War generally, the Confederacy, the importance of "fact mongers"? Are all the good topics gone? He intends, in an informal way, to share his experiences, his ideas, and his biases.

After teaching for a few years at a boys preparatory school, Hughes served as headmaster of two girls preparatory schools for twenty-five years: St. Mary's Episcopal School in Memphis (currently celebrating its 150th anniversary) and Girls Preparatory School in Chattanooga. He retired in 1987, at age 56, "to play bridge and golf, and to learn the craft of fiction writing, and to resume long-postponed research."



Nathaniel Cheairs Hughes

Hughes is the author or editor of eleven books, including one book of poetry, *The Instruction of Manual Ex-*



571st Regular Meeting

☆ ☆ ☆

Nathaniel Cheairs Hughes, Jr., on "Forty Years on the Firing Line"

☆ ☆ ☆

Friday, May 8

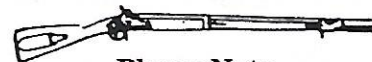
☆ ☆ ☆

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 Chicken with Lemon Herb Sauce or Catch of the Day



Please Note

Make your reservation by Wednesday, May 6, 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 Policy: Effective immediately, the new parking rate is \$8.00 if you park between the hours of 4:30-10:30 p.m. in the lot adjacent to the Union League Club. If you do not get your ticket validated or park beyond the hours listed, you must pay the full amount.

pressly Prohibits Painting Over Portholes (1973). Other books include *Kentucky Memories of Uncle Sam Williams* (edited in collaboration with his wife, Buckner L. Hughes); *The Battle of Belmont: Grant Strikes South* (1991); *The* (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

President	Robert Girardi
Senior Vice President	James Nethery
Vice President	Charles Bednar
Vice President	Bruce Allardice
Treasurer	Roger Bohn
Secretary	Norman Poteshman
Assistant Treasurer	Janet Linhart
Assistant Secretary	Ted Birndorf
Inspector General	Bruce Allardice
Membership Registrar	Carole Le Claire
Tour Registrar	Carole Le Claire
Newsletter Editor	Barbara Hughett
Contributing Editors	C. Robert Douglas, David Richert Larry Gibbs, Mary Munsell Abroe

Founding Newsletter Editor: Gil Twiss, 1954-1968

Board of Trustees

Terms expiring in 1998: Donni Case, Paul Eastes, Scott Graham, Thomas Herres
Terms expiring in 1999: Paul Feiss, Michael Marienthal, Frank Patton, Marge Smogor

Committee Chairs

Spring Battlefield Tour	Charles Bednar
Co-chairs:	Brooks Davis, Roger Bohn
Battlefield Preservation Fund	Mary Munsell Abroe
Ways and Means	Kurt Carlson
Membership	Eleanor Leichenko
Publications/Printed Material	David Richert
Publicity/Public Relations	Don Sender
Hospitality	Janet Linhart, J.J. Smart
Nominating	Larry Gibbs
Field Artist/Archives	Jerry Warshaw
Nevins-Freeman Award	Mary Munsell Abroe
Honors	Norman Poteshman
Battlefield Preservation Raffle and Schimmelfenning Boutique	Paul Eastes Scott Graham, Bing Owens
Tape Record Librarians	Robert Girardi Roger Bohn
House	Scott Graham Paul Eastes

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.

Past President Richard McAdoo was presented with the Al Meyer Award at the April 17 meeting. The award is given for outstanding contributions of service to The Civil War Round Table. Richard and his wife Carol moved to North Carolina in late April. They will be very missed!

BATTLEFIELD PRESERVATION

☆ UPDATE ☆

by David Richert

Money from the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund will be used to buy more than 1,200 acres of privately owned property inside park boundaries at six Civil War battlefields. Of the \$11 million appropriated for this purpose, Antietam will receive \$900,000; Monocacy \$3.5 million; Pecos National Military Park in New Mexico \$600,000; Gettysburg \$2.9 million; Stones River \$1.1 million; and Fredericksburg & Spotsylvania \$2 million.

A total of \$328 million was appropriated from the Fund for land acquisition at national parks and wilderness areas. The Fund, which is supported by royalties from oil and gas leases, has been untapped for years. The projected federal surplus prompted the government to loosen the purse strings. Senators James Jeffords of Vermont and Robert Torricelli of New Jersey had hoped to pry loose another \$50 million for battlefields but their proposal died.

The first "Texas Star" Award of the Texas Civil War Preservation Seminar has been presented to Jerry Russell, national chairman of Civil War Round Table Associates and a life member of our Round Table. It was presented at the Seminar's fourth annual meeting in Hillsboro, Texas. According to Don Laney, cochairman of the Seminar, "Jerry was selected for his tireless, unswerving, and selfless devotion to our nation's hallowed Civil War heritage. For decades he has charged with the colors of Civil War preservation and has done so, time and time again, long before it was the fashionable thing to do. In many ways Jerry represents the conscience of the Civil War community."

The Seminar raised more than \$10,000 for Civil War preservation. Proceeds will go to the Association for the Preservation of Civil War Sites for saving the Brandy Station Battlefield and to the Central Virginia Battlefields Trust to help preserve a portion of the Chancellorsville Battlefield.

Although the Cobb County Board of Commissioners adopted a plan for preserving endangered Confederate earthworks near Kennesaw, Georgia, no funds were set aside for the project. A year long \$25,000 preservation study funded by the American Battlefield Protection Program called for the immediate purchase of three segments of the 25-mile-long Brushy Mountain Line with an eye toward making them accessible to the public. Failure to act soon could mean the loss of the sites since much of the line traverses one of metro Atlanta's fastest growing areas.

The line originally stretched from east of Kennesaw Mountain due west to Lost Mountain near Dallas. It was dug by Confederate General Joe Johnston in 1864 to shield Marietta and the Western and Atlantic Railroad from the army of General William T. Sherman.

In more positive news from Georgia, the "Georgia Overlook," a stone parapet atop Kennesaw Mountain, reopened in late February after a \$50,000 renovation. The Overlook, which is about 1,000 feet above the surrounding terrain, is one of the most scenic sites associated with the Civil War.

☪ APRIL MEETING ☪

by Larry Gibbs

On April 17, at the 570th regular meeting of The Civil War Round Table, Civil War artist Keith Rocco spoke before 111 members and guests. His topic was "Civil War Art: 'On Campaign.'" Rocco, a former member of this Round Table, has been a resident of Woodstock, Virginia, for the past several years. He is not only known as a great Civil War artist, but has gained a reputation as an artist of world renown.

Rocco's presentation was a combination of first-person narrative from the soldiers' own diaries and journals and slides of his paintings. He explained, "I try to portray stories in pictures of common soldiers with uncommon circumstances." His paintings showed the evolution of rank-and-file soldiers moving from camp to campaign, through emotional battle scenes to the aftermath of carnage resulting from battle.

In an attempt to blend the painting with the accuracy of the scene, historical research is extremely important. Some scenes are reflections of the way the scene appeared from a Civil War photograph. However, some sites have dramatically changes from the 1860s, posing a serious problem for the artist. Rocco indicated that a pencil drawing would take about 300 hours, the actual painting time would be another 300 hours, and the unknown factor would be the time that is needed to be spent doing historical research.

One of the first paintings in his presentation showed camp life on a Sunday morning, with a barber shaving a soldier. Nearby, watching and savoring the moment, three other soldiers appear to be waiting for their turn. Several depictions of camp life illustrated the primitive conditions for the rough, uncouth soldiers. Sentry duty was usually very dull; soldiers who were sentries had to report any enemy activity, but boredom and the mud were also their enemies. Bugles, combined with drums and fifes, began the day for the common soldier at 5:45 a.m., followed by a series of bugle calls for different activities, until 9:15 p.m.

In a series of slides on campaigning, the drum corps went to the front for the march into battle. Rocco states, "The drum was associated with the infantry at the beginning of the war, but the bugle became more appreciated as the war continued." A painting showing the dangers awaiting a sharpshooter was evocative of a work of Winslow Homer. Rocco admitted that Homer had an influence on the style of realism in the paintings he does.

In discussing the role of combat, he claimed, "From my research, there were many emotions involving combat scenes, such as the sounds of battles and some humorous morbidity to mask the reality of death, but all soldiers remembered one distinct emotion—fear!" In a desperate scene Rocco depicts at the cornfield during the Battle of Antietam, a tremendous barrage of gunfire knocks out dozens of soldiers, creating hysterical excitement for the moment. The volleys of fire and unheeded groans from the wounded were effectively illustrated.

In scenes of combat, great urgency and immediacy were shown, especially in his painting of the Battle of Corinth, where there was furious fighting over railroad tracks. Another painting shows the courage of a color bearer, holding his flag in the face of intense rifle fire.

These violent scenes were in marked contrast to the camp and campaign paintings Rocco had shown earlier.

He illustrated the aftermath of battle most vividly in depictions of the medical units and burial details. One soldier wrote in his diary, "The stench took our breath away," after witnessing the results of battle. Surviving soldiers were given as much care as possible. One very exhausted doctor wrote to his family about the many amputations of limbs that he had done. In one of Rocco's paintings, a very poignant scene of a Yankee giving a wounded Rebel a drink from a canteen illustrates the grudging respect that each side had for the other.

Rocco concluded, "It is rather sad to think that only monuments exist on battlefields today where heroic struggles occurred during the conflict; a few descriptive comments on plaques are sterile. By comparison, I hope that these paintings can convey the incredible human suffering and sacrifice captured by the words of these soldiers in their diaries."

HUGHES (continued from page 1)

Cheairs Index (biographical sketches of 4,000 individuals with the Cheairs surname); *The Life and Wars of Gideon J. Pillow* (1993), which received the Tennessee History Book Award for 1993; *The Civil War Memoir of Philip Daingerfield Stephenson, D.D.*; and *Bentonville: The Final Battle of Sherman and Johnston* (1996).

Several projects are in preparation. They include writing and editing projects: a biography (in collaboration with Thomas C. Ware) of nineteenth century poet-soldier Theodore O'Hara; a history of the 5th Company, Washington Artillery of New Orleans; a compilation (in collaboration with John Wilson) of Hamilton County Confederates; a biography of Congressman James Hilland; editing (in collaboration with Round Table President Robert I. Girardi) the prison letters of William P. Carlin; and the writing of his first novel, *The Piece*, the story of the crew of a Confederate 12-pounder Napoleon.

Nominating Committee Report

Larry Gibbs, chair of the Nominating Committee, has announced the following proposed slate of officers for the 1998-99 term:

President James Nethery
 Senior Vice President Charles Bednar
 Vice President Bruce Allardice
 Vice President Roger Bohn
 Treasurer Janet Linhart
 Assistant Treasurer Donni Case Hewitt
 Secretary Norman Poteshman
 Assistant Secretary Theodore Birndorf

Trustees (terms expiring in 2000):

Paul Eastes, Larry Hewitt
 Nancy Jacobs, Jerri-Jennifer Smart

(Four current trustees—Paul Feiss, Michael Marienthal, Frank Patton, and Marge Smogor—remain in office as they complete their two-year terms.)

The election will be held during the May meeting, at which time additional nominations for any of the above offices may be made from the floor.

The New Books

Compiled by C. Robert Douglas



- Coombe, Jack D. *Thunder Along the Mississippi: The River Battles that Split the Confederacy*. Sharpedon Publishers. 1996. \$24.95.
- Coski, John M. *Capital Navy — The Men, Ships and Operations of the James River Squadron*. Savas Publ. Co. 1996. \$29.95.
- Cozzens, Peter. *The Darkest Days of the War: The Battles of Iuka and Corinth*. U. of N. Carolina Press. 1997. \$39.95.
- Crofts, Thomas. *History of the Third Ohio Cavalry*. Blue Acorn Press. 1997. \$32.50. Original of 1910.
- Croushore, James H., ed. *A Volunteer's Adventure: A Union Captain's Record of the Civil War by John William De Forest*. LSU Press. 1996. Pbk. \$11.95. Original of 1946.
- Daniel, Larry J. *Shiloh: The Battle that Changed the Civil War*. Simon & Schuster. 1997. \$26.00.
- David, Edwin A. *Fallen Guidon — The Saga of Confederate General Jo Shelby's March to Mexico*. Texas A & M U. Press. 1995. \$27.50.

The 1998 Lincoln Prize was awarded to James M. McPherson on April 16 at the Union League Club of New York City. The Prize is presented annually by the Lincoln and Soldiers Institute at Gettysburg College to recognize excellence in Civil War studies. McPherson's book, *For Cause and Comrades: Why Men Fought in the Civil War*, an examination of diaries and letters of the Civil War's common soldiers, was judged the best such work of 1997. McPherson received \$30,000 and a bronze bust of Lincoln based on Augustus St. Gaudens's life-sized sculpture, Lincoln the Man. (McPherson received the 1989 Pulitzer Prize for history for his *Battle Cry of Freedom*, and he was the recipient of this Round Table's 1996 Nevins-Freeman Award.)

The Harrisburg Dispatch, the newsletter of the Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, Civil War Round Table, reports that the long-awaited equestrian statue of Confederate General James Longstreet will be unveiled and dedicated on Friday, July 3, at 9:30 a.m., at Pitzer Woods, Gettysburg National Military Park. A memorial ball will be held that night at Gettysburg High School.

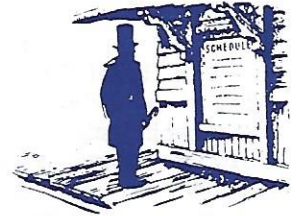
Schimmelfennig Boutique

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 29-May 3*: Annual Battlefield Tour, "Western Armies on the Carolina Campaign"
- May 8*: Nathaniel Cheairs Hughes, Jr., on "Forty Years on the Firing Line"
- June 12*: John Michael Priest on "Pickett's Charge"
- September 11*: Brian Pohanka on "When History Makes Hollywood"
- October 9*: Nevins-Freeman address: William C. (Jack) Davis on "Civil War Mythology"
- November 13*: To be announced
- December 11*: Paul Finkelman on "Lincoln, Emancipation, and the Limits of Constitutional Change"
- January 8, 1999*: Marshall D. Krolick on "Council of War: Meade and His Generals on July 2, 1863"

Remembering Robert Biester by Nancy Jacobs

With great sadness, we inform you of the passing of member **Robert Biester** in December 1997. He was an electrical engineer at Fermilab in Batavia. Bob's enthusiasm for studying the Civil War was a special joy that many of us were fortunate to share with him. Bob told his wife that last year's Round Table battlefield tour to Richmond was the best trip he had ever taken, anywhere in the world. We shall miss him. Our condolences go to his wife Elaine, also a Round Table member, and to his family.

We are sad to report the death of member **Arthur Gordon** on April 9. A retired real estate developer, he was the founder of Arthur M. Gordon Builder, Inc., and a former president of the Chicago Heights school board. He later tutored children in reading at Byrd Elementary School at Cabrini-Green and also participated in the Institute for Learning in Retirement at Northwestern University. Art attended many Round Table meetings over the past few years and was a participant in some of our battlefield tours. We offer our deepest condolences to his wife Sylvia, also a Round Table member, and to his family.

Dr. Wayne Wolf will address the luncheon meeting of the Union League Club Civil War Round Table on Monday, May 18. His topic will be "The Common Soldier in Civil War." A reception begins at the Union League Club at 11:30 a.m.; luncheon is served at noon. The cost is \$15 per person. For reservations, call 312-435-5000.