

THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

Volume LVIII, Number 10

Chicago, Illinois

June 1998

John Michael Priest on "Into the Fight: Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg"

by Barbara Hughett

The brave charge led by Confederate Generals George Pickett, James Pettigrew, and Isaac Trimble has long been a favorite topic of discussion. It has been called "the high-water mark of the Confederacy" by both poets and historians. We will hear a new appraisal of this action on June 12, when John Michael Priest will speak on "Into the Fight: Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg," which is also the title of his new book. In his presentation, Mr. Priest will separate the myth from the reality of that momentous event.

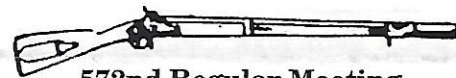
After thoroughly reassessing primary sources about the charge, Priest has developed a very different interpretation from the more traditional accounts. During the course of his research, he has identified the accurate brigade dispositions for Pickett's Division, located the position of Confederate General James Dearing's artillery battalion, carefully traced Pickett's steps throughout the charge, and has pinpointed where both Pettigrew's and Pickett's men broke under fire.

Priest's study, which pays close attention to terrain and tactical deployment, explains why General James Kemper's final deployment on the Confederate right assumed the formation it did. He will also delve into the issues surrounding the flag captured, which regiments advanced farther than the others in the charge, and how many troops probably crossed the Emmitsburg Road. The focus of the presentation will be on presenting a logical reassessment of Pickett's Charge, and not a revisionist perspective. Priest's assessments will be based upon the observations of those who were there, blended with a very conscientious interpretation of the terrain and how it influenced the attack.

John Michael Priest received his bachelor's degree at Loyola College in Baltimore. He received his graduate education at Hood College in Frederick, Maryland, where he earned a Certification in Administration and Supervision, and has done post-graduate work at Hood College and at Western Maryland College. He is a teacher of U.S. Studies and



John Michael Priest



572nd Regular Meeting

☆ ☆ ☆

John Michael Priest on "Into the Fight: Pickett's Charge at Gettysburg"

☆ ☆ ☆

Friday, June 12

☆ ☆ ☆

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
or Catch of the Day



Please Note

Make your reservation by Wednesday, June 10, 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.

Advanced Placement U.S. History at South Hagerstown High School, in Hagerstown, Maryland.

In addition to his new book on Pickett's Charge, books he has written or edited include: *Antietam: 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.

We just recently learned of the death of **Maurice Dickenson**, who was a member of this Round Table for a number of years and joined us on several annual battlefield tours. He died during the summer of 1997, following a long illness. Our belated but sincerest condolences go to his family.

BATTLEFIELD PRESERVATION

☆ UPDATE ☆

by Mary Munsell Abroe

Averasboro Preservationists Receive Donation from CWRT: As reported in the February 1998 edition of this newsletter, The Civil War Round Table of Chicago contributed \$500 last year to the Bentonville Battlefield Association in anticipation of our journey to North Carolina for the 1998 spring battlefield tour. During the actual tour, Round Table members benefited from the hospitality of those at Bentonville and others whose cities and sites we visited. Thus, in gratitude for the warm welcome extended by the Averasboro Battlefield Commission and appreciation for its preservation activities, we contributed \$200 (from the Battlefield Preservation Fund) to support the commission's ongoing effort to preserve and promote sites in the Averasboro/Smithville area. For Round Table members interested in contacting the Averasboro Battlefield Commission, its address is: P.O. Box 1085, Dunn, North Carolina 28335.

Battlefield Preservation Fund Will Benefit from Newmans' Gift: The generosity of Ralph and Patricia Newman has provided a great opportunity for The Civil War Round Table of Chicago to augment its Battlefield Preservation Fund. A significant number of books from Ralph's library have been donated to the organization of which he is one of two surviving founders; the books will be used to raise monies for the Round Table's Preservation Fund, through the Schimmelfenning Boutique's monthly raffles and other fundraising events. In this way, Ralph's thoughtfulness continues to advance our study of the Civil War by supporting the crusade to preserve its battlefields and other sites. On behalf of the membership, thank you to Ralph and Patricia Newman for their appropriate and meaningful contribution.

ABPB Announces National Preservation Conference: In conjunction with the Association for the Preservation of Civil War Sites, the Civil War Trust, and Fort Sumter National Monument, the American Battlefield Protection Program of the National Park Service will sponsor the Fourth National Conference on Battlefield Preservation from September 16-19, 1998, in Charleston, South Carolina. The conference will examine ways and means to define and protect historic battlefields; tours of Fort Sumter, the battlefield at Secessionville, and other local sites are also planned. Direct enquiries about the conference to Hampton Tucker, of the ABPP, at 202-343-3580, or via e-mail at htucker@hps.cr.nps.gov.

Longtime Chicago Round Table member **Paul Klekner** will discuss "Major General George Henry Thomas: Soldier of Conscience" at the Union League Club Civil War Round Table luncheon meeting on Monday, June 29. 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.

☛ MAY MEETING ☛

by Larry Gibbs

On May 8, at the 571st regular meeting of The Civil War Round Table, Nathaniel Cheairs Hughes, Jr., addressed 78 members and guests on the topic, "Forty Years on the Firing Line." A resident of Chattanooga, Dr. Cheairs is the author of eleven books, including *The Battle of Belmont: Grant Strikes Back* (1991) and *Bentonville: The Final Battle of Sherman and Johnston* (1996). With an effective use of anecdotes, Hughes regaled the audience with stories of his research and relationships with other historians.

After researching the Civil War at the University of North Carolina in the mid-1950s, Hughes became a teacher and headmaster at two private preparatory schools until 1987, when he resumed his interest in writing history. In addition to the books listed above, Hughes has written biographies on Confederate Generals William Hardee, St. John R. Liddell, and Gideon Pillow. He admitted that an even-handed approach to the study of Pillow's life and career was a real challenge; a severe test to the objectivity of Hughes arose as more contradictions of the often-maligned Gideon Pillow confronted him.

In discussing the question of objectivity for modern historians, Hughes claimed that—while there is more accumulated knowledge available than ever before—there is also a greater need for judgment in making use of materials. He said, "I interpret the material, but I always admonish myself: 'Be careful!' One should be very suspicious of writers, especially those who write with absolute certainty."

Hughes posed the question, "How do we deal with the past, especially war?" He said: "Historians desire—or should desire—to tell the true story of what happened and what seemed to happen. The materials that a historian uses include diaries, letters, journals, autobiographies, and newspapers. In using these materials, the past is somehow more real than the present. To read fifty diaries about an event or character makes a historian more of a part of the past than the present.... There exists a surreal reality in the writing of history."

Reflecting on the biographies of some of the interesting Civil War personalities, Hughes claimed, "These men took risks in life that I could not take today." In discussing accuracy in historical writing, he said that no matter how strenuously he strives for accuracy, he frequently says to himself, "I wish that I could write it again and get it right!" He made some observations about his style of writing history: "I am one of the plodding historians, such as Bruce Allardice and Mark Bradley..... I build a story on the facts, brick by brick."

Referring to difficulties facing modern historians, Hughes claimed that sometimes today's historians seem to have an ax to grind. They have a preconceived thesis before serious research has begun. Once he told a fellow historian that he was doing research on the Battle of Bentonville. The other historian asked Hughes what his thesis was. A perplexed Hughes answered, "Thesis? I am going to allow the research to determine the main point of the story." He continued, "We (historians) do not do justice to the personalities of the Civil War. It is very difficult to be an impartial observer as a historian. Some

historians use history to shape their conclusions, rather than serve history, and I think that is terribly wrong. I never start with a preconception, but allow the facts to lead to a conclusion."

JOHN MICHAEL PRIEST (continued from page 1)
Soldiers' Battle (1989); *The Diary of Captain James Wren* (1990); *Before Antietam: The Battle for South Mountain* (1992); *The McMahan Diary* (1993); *Stephen Elliott Welch of the Hampton Legion* (1994); a two-volume study of the Battle of the Wilderness, *Nowhere to Run* (Volume I) and *Victory Without Triumph* (Volume II) (1995); *Turn Them Out to Die Like A Mule* (1995); and *One Surgeon's Private War* (1996). He has also written numerous articles for major national Civil War magazines.

**Summer Executive
Committee Meeting**

President-elect James Nethery has announced that the Summer Executive Committee meeting will be held on Saturday, June 27, from 9 a.m. till noon, at Notre Dame High School, 7655 West Dempster, in Niles. Coffee and additional light refreshments will be available. All former presidents who are still active members, all current (1998-1999) officers, and all current (1998-1999) committee chairs are urged to attend. Executive Committee members will receive official notification and additional materials in the mail from President-elect Nethery.

The annual luncheon of the Stephen A. Douglas Association will be held on Saturday, June 6, at the Hyatt on Printers Row, at noon. Dr. Robert Johannsen will speak on "Stephen A. Douglas and the Mexican War." The cost is \$30 per person. The luncheon will be preceded by ceremonies at 11:00 a.m. at the Douglas Tomb State Historic Site, 636 East 35th Street; remarks there will be made by Douglas Association President (and former Round Table president) C. Robert Douglas. To reserve a space, call David Richert at 312-558-6900, extension 119.

We learn from the *Newswalker*, the newsletter of the Westchester (New York) Civil War Round Table, that Neil Magnum, who spoke to us during the 1991-1992 season, has recently been named superintendent of the Little Big Horn Battlefield National Monument in Montana.

According to an item in *The Bugle Call*, the newsletter of the Hagerstown (Maryland) Civil War Round Table, Ballantine has recently published the conclusion of a Civil War trilogy, Jeff Schaara's *The Last Full Measure*. The story covers the tragic trail from the carnage of Gettysburg to General Robert E. Lee's surrender at Appomattox. Jeff is the son of the late Michael Schaara, author of *The Killer Angels* (19—), and is himself the author of *Gods and Generals* (1996).

The New Books

Compiled by C. Robert Douglas



- Dunaway, Wayland F. *Reminiscences of a Rebel*. Butternut and Blue. 1996. \$25.00. Original of 1913.
- Evans, David. *Sherman's Horsemen: Union Cavalry Operations in the Atlanta Campaign*. Indiana U. Press. 1996. \$39.95.
- Faust, Drew G. *Mothers of Invention: Women of the Slaveholding South During the Civil War*. U. of N. Carolina Press. 1996. \$29.95.
- Field, Ron. *The Confederate Army (Uniforms)*. Brassey's. 1996. \$31.95.
- Fisher, John E. *They Rode with Forrest and Wheeler — A Chronicle of Five Tennessee Brothers' Service in the Confederate Western Cavalry*. McFarland & Co. 1995. \$29.95.
- Fleming, James R. *Band of Brothers: Company C, 9th Tennessee Infantry (C.S.A.)*. White Mane Publ. Co. 1996. \$32.95.
- Fonvielle, Chris E., Jr. *The Wilmington Campaign: "The Last Rays of Departing Hope"*. Savas Publ. Co. 1996. \$32.95.
- Frassanito, William A. *Gettysburg Then & Now—Touring the Battlefield with Old Photos*. Thomas Publications. 1996. Pbk. \$8.95.
- Gaff, Alan D. *On Many a Bloody Field: Four Years in the Iron Brigade*. Indiana U. Press. 1997. \$29.95.
- Gallagher, Gary W., ed. *The Wilderness Campaign*. U. of N. Carolina Press. 1997. \$29.95.
- Gambone, A. M. *Hancock at Gettysburg ... and Beyond*. Butternut and Blue. 1997. \$38.75.
- Garrison, Webb. *Lincoln's Little War: How His Carefully Crafted Plans Went Astray*. Rutledge Hill Press. 1997. Pbk. \$12.95.
- Gleeson, Ed. *Illinois Rebels: A Civil War Unit History of G Company, 15th Tennessee Regiment Volunteer Infantry*. Guild Press of Indiana. 1996. \$22.00.
- Hartwig, D. Scott. *A Killer Angels Companion*. Thomas Publications. 1996. Pbk. \$7.95.
- Hattaway, Herman. *Shades of Blue and Gray: An Introductory Military History of the Civil War*. U. of Missouri Press. 1997. \$29.95.
- Hearn, Chester G. *Six Years of Hell — Harpers Ferry During the Civil War*. LSU Press. 1996. \$29.95.

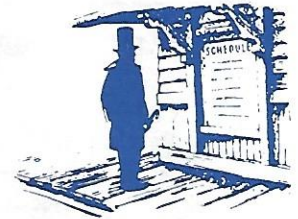
Schimmelfennig Boutique

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.
- June 12: John Michael Priest on "Pickett's Charge"
- September 11: Brian Pohanka on "When History Meets Hollywood"
- October 9: Nevins-Freeman address: William C. (Jack) Davis on "Civil War Mythology"
- November 13: Robert O'Neill on "The Federal Cavalry in the Peninsula Campaign"
- 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"
- February 12: Edwin C. Bearss, topic to be announced
- March 12: Peter Cozzins, topic to be announced
- April 9: Gary Gallagher, topic to be announced
- May 14: Michael Andrus, topic to be announced
- June 11: To be announced

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

- Richard McAdoo, P.O. Box 87, Merritt, NC 28556-0087
(This is a temporary summer address; a permanent address will appear in the September newsletter.)

-
- Herdegen, Lance J. *The Men Stood Like Iron: How the Iron Brigade Won Its Name*. Indiana U. Press. 1997. \$24.95.
- Holzer, Harold. *Witness to War: The Civil War 1861-1865*. Perigree Books. 1996. Pbk. \$12.50.
- Hubbell, John T. and Geary, James W., eds. *Biographical Dictionary of the Union: Northern Leaders of the Civil War*. Greenwood Press. 1997. \$99.50.
- Hummel, Jeffrey R. *Emancipating Slaves, Enslaving Free Men*. Open Court Publ. Co. 1996. \$39.95.
- Johnson, Clint. *Touring the Carolinas' Civil War Sites*. John Blair, Publisher. 1996. Pbk. \$19.95.
- Johnson, Clint. *Civil War Blunders: Amusing Incidents from the War*. John Blair, Publisher. 1997. Pbk. \$12.95.
- Jordan, William B., Jr. *Red Diamond Regiment: The 17th Maine Infantry, 1862-1865*. White Mane Publ. Co. 1996. \$30.00.
- Joslyn, Maurice P. *Valor and Lace: The Roles of Confederate Women 1861-1865*. Journal of Confederate History. 1996. Pbk. \$15.00.
- Kerner, Fred. *A Treasury of Lincoln Quotations*. Americana House. 1996. Pbk. \$20.00.
- Kidd, J. H. *Riding with Custer: Recollections of a Cavalryman in the Civil War*. U. of Nebraska Press. 1997. Pbk. \$19.95. Original of 1908.
- Kinard, Jeff. *The Battle of the Crater*. Ryan Place Publishers, Inc. 1995. Pbk. \$11.95.