



# THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

Volume XX, Number 5

Chicago, Illinois

January, 1960

## ALAN NOLAN ON - "Brawner Farm-The Baptism of the Iron Brigade"

"It's those sons-of-bitches in the black hats," shouted the rebels when the Iron Brigade came over McPherson's ridge the first day at Gettysburg. The rebels had been expecting only militia opposition.

The only western brigade in the Union's Army of the Potomac already had a reputation and it was not alone from their black slouch hats. Southern writers had a bias for western federals as distinguished from Yankee federals. They wrote of the Iron Brigade in the same vein as of the Stonewall Brigade, which the "Black Hats" met at Brawner farm for the first of several times.

Alan T. Nolan, attorney, a founder, secretary, and president of the Indianapolis Civil War Round Table, will speak to our meeting, Friday, January 15, on "Brawner Farm - the Baptism of the Iron Brigade." At the time, the brigade had four regiments - the 2d, 6th and 7th Wisconsin and the 19th Indiana. The 24th Michigan was added later.

"The Iron Brigade was organized on October 1, 1861," Nolan notes. "As a part of the 1st Corps it was withheld from the Peninsula and as a result of a series of accidental circumstances was not seriously engaged until August 28, 1862. On that day, on the eve of Second Bull Run, the Iron Brigade was unexpectedly assailed by overwhelming numbers from Jackson's Corps along the Warrenton Turnpike between Gainesville and Groveton, Virginia, en route to Centerville. This engagement was on a farm owned by the Brawner family.

"The engagement is usually referred to as 'Gainesville' or 'Groveton', but I have called it 'Brawner Farm'. It was a fight of unusual ferocity in which the Iron Brigade, with support from two regiments from Doubleday's Brigade and with only one battery of artillery, conducted a remarkable defense. The engagement is referred to in passing by many writers, but has never been closely analyzed in detail. John Gibbon was the commander at the time, but the brigade was not yet known as the Iron Brigade."

Nolan, 36, a native of Evansville, Ind., graduate of Indiana University and Harvard law school, married and father of four children, is completing a military history of the Iron Brigade which he has sold to Macmillan. It will be published in 1960. The book is based on the Official Records and on manuscript materials found at historical societies, libraries, and in private hands.

The first commander of the Iron Brigade was Rufus King of Wisconsin. He bore the name of a grandfather in the Continental Congress who proposed in 1785 that slavery and involuntary servitude be proscribed in the Old Northwest territory. This was made a provision of the Northwest Ordinance of 1787. Another famed "black hat" was Rufus Dawes, who nailed up posters to recruit a Wisconsin company of "Minute Men" - recalling his great-grandfather, William Dawes, Paul Revere's lesser known colleague on the eve of Lexington and Concord. An-

### NOTICE

187th REGULAR MEETING

Alan T. Nolan

on

"Brawner Farm - The Baptism  
of the Iron Brigade"

FRIDAY, JANUARY 15, 1960

St. Clair Hotel

162 East Ohio Street

Cocktails at 5:30 p.m.

Dinner at 6:30

other well descended American in the brigade was a grandson of Alexander Hamilton.

After King, the next two commanders of the Iron Brigade were Gibbon and Solomon Meredith (up from colonel of the 19th Indiana), both natives of North Carolina. They led the brigade through Second Bull Run, South Mountain, Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville and Gettysburg.

"Despite the romantic aspects", Nolan said, "the fame of the Iron Brigade rests on its combat record. It had the highest percentage losses of any brigade in the federal armies."

Singers Peggy King and Connie Towers are Civil War gals. Peggy, of TV and nite clubs, is an associate member of the Wisconsin Civil War Centennial Commission and a serious collector of items pertaining to the war. Connie, who starred and sang in "The Horse Soldiers," is featuring "Lorena" in her nite club appearances.

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A member of the Philadelphia CWRT is trying to organize a quartet to sing "All Quiet Along the Potomac Tonight", "The Bonnie Blue Flag", "The Union Forever", "Lorena", and "Dixie" at meetings.



# THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE



FOUNDED DECEMBER 3, 1940

18 East Chestnut Street,  
Chicago 11, Illinois  
Phone: Whitehall 4-3085

## OFFICERS

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## STATE CENTENNIAL COMMISSION ORGANIZES

State Senator George P. Johns (R., Decatur) was elected chairman of the Illinois Civil War Centennial Commission when its organizational meeting was held December 11 in Springfield.

Elected co-vice chairman were State Representative Ralph Stephenson (R., Moline) and Newton C. Farr of Chicago, chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Illinois State Historical Library. State Historian Clyde C. Walton of Springfield is secretary under the terms of the bill passed by the legislature with a \$10,000 appropriation.

Other legislative members are Charles F. Armstrong (D., Chicago) and James O. Monroe (D., Collinsville). Other public members are Mrs. Ruth Gilster, Chester; Mayor Wasson W. Lawrence, Fairfield; Ralph G. Newman, Chicago, and Robert E. Miller, Jr., Springfield.

Farr and Newman are founding members of the Civil War Round Table. Newman is president of the Illinois State Historical society, Mrs. Gilster and Lawrence are vice-presidents, and Miller a director.

The commission will have charge of the state's observance of the Civil War centennial. Secretary Walton said one of the first efforts will be a drive to collect Civil War diaries, letters, and scrapbooks. These may be deposited "on loan" or presented to the Historical Library where they will be available to historians and students.

Other objectives include: the care and repair of Civil War memorials in the state and on battlefields; a centennial history of Illinois participation in the Civil War; a Union list of Civil War documents in the state; a Civil War guide to Illinois and a guide to Illinois participation in the war anywhere in the United States.

The commission will serve as a clearing house for information and will aid local committees in their observances. In addition to the nine member commission, an advisory board will be created. Regional meetings will be held in various parts of the state.



*from the  
Editor's pen*



Jerry Slechta (left) and Norman Graebner

(Photo by Al Meyer)

An audience of 75 gave close attention to Dr. Norman Graebner at the December 11 meeting and then came up with a spirited question period.

Dr. Graebner reviewed American foreign policy to the time of Abraham Lincoln. Then Secretary of State Seward took a firm stand with the French and British to stay out of American affairs. The Union's stand was that the nation had a right and duty to live.

"Britain and France avoided involvement in the American Civil War because Lincoln and Seward made it to their interest to do so," Dr. Graebner said. "... It was within the power of the Old World to bring injury to the North, but after 1863 not salvation to the South ... Lincoln reckoned on the forbearance of European nations."

Lincoln's one goal, Dr. Graebner said, was to reforge the Union... "He fought to save the Union and never confused the issue of the war.... He practiced the art of the possible - he took things as they were, not as he wished them to be.... He always understood the limitation of the powers he held."

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In the Bulletin Board, announcement is made that dues for the 1960-'61 year beginning July 1 will be \$12.50. Dues have been \$15, including a subscription to Civil War History. Now the periodical has been dropped and dues returned to their last previous figure.

Civil War History is held in highest esteem and the action was taken reluctantly. The principal reason was to relieve Civil War Round Table officers of bookkeeping work involved. Another reason was to allow Round Table members a freedom of choice in their subscription.

At our battlefield tour gathering in Richmond in 1953, Clyde C. Walton outlined the plans for Civil War History to be published by the State University of Iowa. Our Round Table pledged to back the venture by including subscription in our dues. That has been done since Volume I, Number I came out in March, 1955.

It is our hope that Civil War History is now well established and will find even wider favor under its new editor, Dr. James I. Robertson, Jr., in the centennial years ahead.

At the time of our next dues period we will include a subscription offer from Civil War History with our newsletter and hope that participation will be unanimous.

8:45 AM

# 10th BATTLEFIELD TOUR

The 10th annual Battlefield Tour of Chicago Civil War Round Table has been set for April 27 to May 1. Campaigners will fly to Washington D.C., then travel by bus until the return flight from Washington.

The first day will include visits to Battle Abbey, the Confederate White House, and the capitol at Richmond. Headquarters will be at the John Marshall hotel for two nights.

The second day, April 28, will be spent at the battlefields of Petersburg and Five Forks returning to Richmond for the night. The third day takes in Amelia Court House, Jettersville, Saylor's Creek, Farmville, and Appomattox. That night will be spent at Town and Country motel, Charlottesville, Va.

On April 30, the tour is to Gordonsville, Cedar Mountain, Orange, Culpeper, Brandy Station, Warrenton, Groveton, and Manassas. The night will be spent at Marriott-Key Bridge motel, Alexandria, Va. On Sunday, May 1, campaigners will have a choice: to Ball's Bluff or to Washington or Mount Vernon.

Co-Chairman Edward Waterbury said that, as usual, breakfasts will be "on your own" and bus starting times will be 9 a.m., except the trip to Appomattox and Charlottesville which will start at 8:30 a.m. To keep the tours on the move, there will be box lunches "in the field."

Co-Chairman Donald Gerlinger is arranging for speakers at the overnight stops. The usual "command post" refreshments will precede the dinners.

Further details will appear in future issues of this newsletter and then there will be a special battlefield tour issue. The April regular meeting will be devoted to discussion of battle sites on the tour.

## SUGGESTS CWRT SPEAKERS BUREAU

The following letter is from one of the Civil War Table's founders, a widely read author, and popular speaker. The letter contains the suggestion for the creation of an agency that appears to be highly desirable:

Dear Mr. Twiss:

With the steadily increasing number of Civil War Round Tables, it seems to me that the creation of a Speakers Bureau is advisable. Other speakers probably have shared my experience of being invited to a far-off city, only to get invited shortly afterward to speak to another group in the same vicinity. Such lack of coordination wastes the speaker's time and the traveling expenses involved.

I suggest that Civil War Round Tables in the same part of the United States form groups; and that a central agency be created, which will have a list of speakers and their subjects available to any Round Table desiring their services.

Cordially, Otto Eisenschiml

The Chicago CWRT will be glad to work with other Round Tables of the middle west in setting up such an agency.

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John R. Peacock of High Point, N. C., a member of our CWRT, is pushing a suggestion that appropriate markers be placed at the unmarked graves of Union and Confederate generals. This, plus the identification of other unmarked graves of Northern and Southern soldiers, is one of the goals of the National Civil War Centennial commission.

# BULLETIN BOARD

AT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETINGS, Dues for the 1960-'61 year, beginning July 1, 1960, have been set at \$12.50, and dues for January 1 to June 30, at \$7.50. Annual dues will no longer include a subscription to Civil War History, but an offer for the periodical will be made separately. Separate offers also will be made for Lincoln Herald and the Illinois State Historical Society.

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THE FALL MEETING of the Illinois Historical Society has been set for October 8 and 9 at Rockford.

\* \* \* \*

NEW MEMBERS of Chicago Civil War Round Table:

<u>Alfred Barr</u> 8705 N. Monticello Ave. Skokie, Illinois	<u>Mac D. Long</u> 3926 Sterling Road Downers Grove, Ill.
<u>Arnold R. Daum</u> 136 Elmwood St. Evanston, Ill.	<u>Alan R. Schneider</u> 6216 N. Monticello Ave. Chicago 45, Ill.
<u>Joseph E. Hoffman</u> R.F.D. 1, Box 63 A Grayslake, Ill.	<u>John G. West</u> 621 Woodland Lane North Northfield, Ill.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS: Arthur C. Friberg, to 1908 W. Hood Ave., Chicago 26, Ill.

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AVAILABLE - At Meetings: Gold finished CWRT lapel pin, \$1; cloth patch of emblem, 50 cents.

## SPEAKERS IN ST. LOUIS

At the third Civil War Centennial Commission national assembly, May 5 and 6, in the Sheraton-Jefferson hotel at St. Louis, Francis Wilshin, superintendent of the Manassas battlefield park, will outline plans for the military review and re-enactment for the centennial of the first battle of Manassas on July 21, 1961.

Charles L. (Pie) Dufour, columnist of the New Orleans Times-Picayune, will speak on "How to Plan a State Centennial Program and How to Carry It out." Dr. James I. Robertson, Jr., editor of Civil War History, will discuss the search for historic documents and how properly to identify and preserve them in local and state archives.

Other speakers who have tentatively accepted invitations to appear are Former President Harry S. Truman, Senator Carl T. Curtis of Nebraska, Senator Stuart Symington of Missouri, Secretary of Interior Fred A. Seaton, and Admiral Stuart H. Ingersoll, president of the Naval War College at Newport, R.I.

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Harrisonburg, Va., city council has approved the opening of a museum, library and reception center for the Shenandoah Valley centennial of 1861-65.





## THE NEW BOOKS

McCowat-Mercer Press of Jackson, Tenn., which our member Seale Johnson heads, has brought out A SOUTHERN WOMAN'S STORY. It is the story of Phoebe Yates Pember, from an aristocratic Jewish family of Charleston, S.C., who was "head nurse" at the Chimborazo hospital in besieged Richmond. It is the reprint of a realistic, well written book. Bell Wiley has edited it, added more of her letters, and written an introduction (199 pages, \$4.95).

In contrast to the large number of titles brought out in the pre-holiday months, only a few were issued over the year-end. Here are some titles issued and forthcoming:

ABRAHAM LINCOLN GOES TO WASHINGTON, by Andrew A. Freeman. Story of first visit to New York and Cooper Union speech. Coward-McCann, \$3.95.

A. LINCOLN: PRAIRIE LAWYER, by John J. Duff, Rinehart.

CIVIL WAR AND RECONSTRUCTION: Selected Essays by Gideon Welles, compiled by Albert Mordell. Nine articles published in THE GALAXY from 1870-73, supplementing the Welles Diary (279 pp., Twayne, \$4.50).

CONFEDERATE WAR POEMS, selected and edited by Walter Burgwyn Jones (Montgomery, Ala., paper, \$1.25).

SUNSET COX: Irrepressible Democrat, by David Lindsey (323 pp., Wayne State U., Detroit, \$5).

CORRECTION: Selling Price of VERMONT GENERAL, by Otto Eisenschiml, is \$6.00 and not \$7.50 as stated in December listing.

### WHAT DO CWRT'S TALK ABOUT?

William Stauffer of Richmond, writing in Civil War Times, analyzed the newsletters of 40 Civil War Round Tables for a year. He found that 325 meetings were held, an average of 8 per Round Table. Out of town speakers appeared at 82 meetings, members accounting for the rest.

Subject matter, number of meetings, and percentage ran like this:

Battles, 67 (20.6); Generals, 37 (11.4); Campaigns and strategy, 30 (9.2); Abraham Lincoln, 28 (8.6); Civil authorities and personalities, 14 (4.3); Causes and effects of the war, 14 (4.3); Navy and the naval blockade, 13 (4.0); Partisan troops and irregulars, 10 (3.1); Centennial plans and programs, 10 (3.1); Books, 9 (2.8); Medical services and hospitals, 9 (2.8); Newsmen, artists, and photographers, 9 (2.8); Spectacular raids, 6 (1.8); Procurement and logistics, 6 (1.8); Prisons, court martials, 5 (1.5); Civilian life, 4 (1.2); Miscellaneous, 8 (2.4).

Forty of the Round Tables participated in 17 organized field trips during the year. Stauffer has suggested that CWRT's in a battlefield area put on a tour each year and open it to CWRT members from other areas.

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As a Civil War Centennial project the CWRT of Toledo obtained the loan of 45 letters written by soldiers of the area during the war, had them microfilmed, and presented them to Toledo Public Library. Toledo also presented a microfilm of two rare newspapers to the Virginia state library. Toledo is putting its exchange news letters on file in the history room of the Toledo library.

## FUTURE MEETINGS



FRIDAY, Feb. 19 - Robert L. Kincaid, president emeritus of Lincoln Memorial University. Joint meeting with Abraham Lincoln Heritage of Chicago.

FRIDAY, March 11 - Dr. James I. Robertson, Jr., editor of Civil War History, "Jackson's Stone Wall: The Stonewall Brigade".

FRIDAY, April 8 - Symposium on sites to be visited on 10th Battlefield tour, April 27 to May 1. Panelists to be announced.

MAY - Dr. T. Harry Williams, Boyd professor of American History, Louisiana State University, a new presentation of the generalship in the Civil War.

JUNE - Date and program to be announced.

### MIDWEST CWRT CALENDAR

TOLEDO, O., Jan. 11 - Civil War centennial film and election.

MILWAUKEE, Jan. 14 - Alan T. Nolan on "The Iron Brigade".

DECATUR, ILL., Jan. 14 - First regular meeting of new group.

PARK FOREST, ILL., Jan. 14 - "Antietam".

SPRINGFIELD, ILL., Jan. 15 - Robert Gibbons, FBI Special Agent, "Secret Service in the Civil War".

CLEVELAND, O., Jan. 18 - Colin Montis, "Little Known Facts About Ohio in the Civil War". Ladies' Night.

MOLINE, ILL., (Quad Cities CWRT), Jan. 20 - B. K. Zobrist, Rock Island Arsenal librarian.

KANSAS CITY, Jan. 27 - Dr. James I. Robertson, Jr., "General Longstreet".



Every state in the old Confederacy has organized a Civil War Centennial commission except Texas.

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### LEE CALLED IT "CIVIL STRIFE"

In a letter written by Gen. Robert E. Lee in August, 1869, he referred to the War of 1861-1865 as having left "marks of Civil Strife" which he believed were better "obliterated" than recalled "by enduring memorials of granite". He did not expressly use the words Civil War, but could hardly have felt that there was any obnoxious or adverse connotation in the use of this term. The original letter is in the library of Gettysburg College. (William Stauffer, Richmond CWRT News Letter).

