

THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

Volume XXXV, Number 7

Chicago, Illinois

March, 1975

FRANK G. RANKIN ON THE ORPHAN BRIGADE-MARCH 14

One of the most famous fighting units of the Civil War will be the subject on March 14, 1975 when we are visited by Kentucky's finest ambassador of good will, Frank G. Rankin. A nationally known expert on the role played during the War by the residents of the Bluegrass, Frank will be describing for us the history and exploits of the Confederacy's First Kentucky Brigade, better known as "The Orphan Brigade".



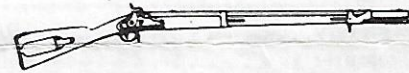
Frank G. Rankin

Its roots go back to the Mexican War when the valor of its predecessor at Buena Vista and Monterey attracted the attention and special comment of General Zachary Taylor. In the years of peace that followed the conflict south of the border, the organization maintained its existence, only to see itself split apart by the events which lead to the Civil War. When the "War for Southern Independence", as Frank will refer to it, broke out, those members with Northern sentiment, led by the future Major General Lovell H. Rousseau, crossed the Ohio River to join the Union. The remainder stayed behind to become an integral part of the Army of Tennessee.

Originally containing approximately five thousand men, the brigade first saw duty at Bowling Green and Fort Donelson. After the fall of these Confederate strongholds, the brigade evacuated Kentucky in 1862, never to return to their native state for the remainder of the war. At times referred to as the "Blood of Boone" because of their ties to the famous frontiersman, the brigade consisted of the 2nd, 4th, 6th and 9th Kentucky regiments, Cobb's Kentucky battery and one outside unit, the 41st Alabama. Its path was the route of the war in the West. Shiloh, Corinth, Vicksburg, Stone's River, Chickamauga, Chattanooga, Kennesaw, Atlanta, Savannah; all saw the spilling of "Orphan" blood until, at the time of brigade's surrender on May 6, 1865, only a few proud companies remained to stack their arms.

The roster of its commanders too is impressive. The brigade was the first Confederate command given to John C. Breckinridge and it was the ex-Vice President who gave it its famous sobriquet. As the unit returned decimated from another Braxton Bragg mistake, an ill-fated charge at Stone's River, Breckinridge exclaimed with tears in his eyes, "My poor orphans! My poor orphans!" Another of the brigade's valiant leaders, Ben Hardin Helm, brother-in-law of President Lincoln, fell with a mortal wound while leading the "Orphans" in the bloody fighting of Chickamauga.

It was exactly four years ago that Frank Rankin last spoke to us, that time on the exploits of another famous Kentuckian, John Hunt Morgan. Frank's long career of devotion to the



339th REGULAR MEETING

Frank G. Rankin

on

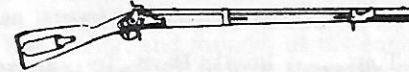
The Orphan Brigade

Friday, March 14, 1975

Chicago Bar Association
29 South LaSalle Street

Cocktails at 5:30 p.m.

Dinner at 6:30 p.m.



Brooks and Betsy Davis will host a cocktail party in honor of our speaker, Frank Rankin, at 4:00 p.m. on the day of the meeting, March 14, 1975. The party will take place in their apartment, 18 East Chestnut Street, Chicago. All Round Table members and Campfollowers are cordially invited.

history of his state is not only one of scholarship, but of service too. Among the numerous posts he has held are founding president of the Louisville Civil War Round Table, honorary life member and trustee of the Kentucky Civil War Round Table, president of the Kentucky Historical Society, president of the Perryville Battlefield Commission, chairman of the George Rogers Clark Heritage Foundation, chairman of the Governor's Committee for the state's 175th Anniversary Commission and many more. He is presently a member of the Kentucky Bicentennial Commission, as well as chairman of the Historic Landmarks and Preservation Commission.

Frank's record of achievement has also extended beyond history into the fields of business, civic affairs and education. He is a thirty-third degree Mason, presently serves as Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Lincoln Memorial University, is a bank director, has twice been president of the Louisville Board of Trade, and was president of the Kentucky Derby Festival Association and the Bourbon Beef Cattle Association. His countless awards include an honorary degree from Indiana Technical University, the Good Citizenship Award of the Sons of the American Revolution, the Award of Merit and Jefferson Davis Medal of the U.D.C., and a Distinguished Service Award from our own Round Table, of which, we are proud to say, he is a member and frequent battlefield tour participant.

THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE



FOUNDED DECEMBER 3, 1940

18 East Chestnut Street
Chicago Illinois 60611
Phone: (312) 944-3085

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Brooks Davis

The only requirement for membership is a genuine interest in the Civil War and its era. For information, address Burton Rovens, 6033 N. Sheridan Road, Chicago, Illinois 60660.



from the Editor's pen



(A review of the newsletters from Round Tables across the country leaves no doubt that the major issue facing Civil War students is battlefield preservation. Gettysburg is already a national disgrace. As the fight continues to prevent the same fate from befalling Antietam, Bull Run and others, we realize that our greatest weapon is publicity. If we are to save our Civil War heritage, we must attract the attention of the general citizenry, as well as our Congressmen. The best way, of course, is through the efforts of the general media. Thus we are extremely grateful when a journalist or broadcaster takes note of the problem. One gentleman to whom we owe heartfelt thanks is Michael Kilian, fine columnist for the Chicago Tribune. Through the courtesy of the Tribune, we herewith reprint Mr. Kilian's article on Gettysburg. It makes the point far better than we ever could. We urge you to not only read it, but to send copies to your neighbors and governmental

representatives so that they too will achieve a better understanding of the battle we are waging.)

"GETTYSBURG, Pa.—As this is supposed to be a real 'fun' column, let me begin by saying that the battle that was fought here in 1863 is considered one of the bloodiest military slaughters in history.

To carry on with the ha ha's, some 159,000 men took part in the battle. When it was over, 7,000 were killed, 10,000 were missing, and more than 33,000 were horribly wounded.

What does this have to do with fun? That's what I wondered when I drove by the miniature golf courses and hamburger stands, turned down the main street past dozens of dayglo-decorated souvenir shops and a restaurant with waiters wearing Civil War uniforms, and pulled in to the Holiday Inn hard by the national cemetery.

There are wooden Indians here, zoo animals, countless 'museums' [where for a small fortune you get to look at an awful lot of old clothes], and even a replica of what one might call a 'wild east' town called The Streets of '63.

For the kiddies, there are rides and electric map shows with flashing lights and tape-recorded sound effects. For the oldies, there are air-conditioned scenicrusher tours of the battlefield, also with tape-recorded sound effects.

They are planning condominiums here, doubtless with names like Minnie Ball Manor and Bloody Angle Estates. Somewhere along the line I seem to recall eating a Gettysburger.

Grotesquely rising from the center of the battlefield is the monstrous Gettysburg tourist tower—resembling a cross between the Seattle Space Needle and a bent bird cage—from which you can peer down 15 stories or so and see the exact spot where some of Gen. Pickett's men had their heads blown off by Union cannon. I did not inquire as to whether the tower would have a revolving restaurant on top, but it probably will. [Pickettburgers, anyone?]

Scrunched between the Holiday Inn and the many-hued Gettysburg Tourist Center is a little 'shrine' called the Jennie Wade House—Ms. Wade having been a 20-year-old girl who became the only civilian fatality of the battle when a stray bullet came thru her door.

They have preserved the house and the actual door with the actual bullet hole in it. As you stand wondering where the bullet struck her back, a tape recording comes on, commencing with screams and concluding with a merry little jingle called 'The Ballad of Jennie Wade.'

To leave the Wade House you have to go thru a souvenir shop crammed with souvenir plastic Civil War muskets, pistols, and swords; vinyl-visored Civil War caps; Union and Confederate flags; miniature cannon that actually fire; and everything else imaginable. I wouldn't be surprised to learn that they sold souvenir toilet tissue with pictures of Abraham Lincoln on it.

I must admit that my wife and I habitually stay at Holiday Inns, that the food in Southern Pennsylvania is incomparable, and that the people of Gettysburg are among the nicest we've ever met.

But is all this Disneyland necessary? They don't sell little white plastic crosses at the allied cemetery at Normandy, nor miniature stones that actually roll at the Holy Sepulchre. At the memorial to the thousands of Jews murdered by the Nazis in Buchenwald, there is certainly no one selling Buchenwald Burgers.

In his famous Gettysburg address, Lincoln said: 'But, in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow, this ground.'

They didn't have to take him literally."



The Louisiana legislature recently voted to continue paying a sixty dollar a month pension to the last widow of a Louisiana Civil War veteran, Mrs. Jerry R. Traylor, 98, of Beaumont, Texas.

FEBRUARY MEETING

Hi-jinks and scholarship were the agenda for the evening when Past President Gordon Whitney appeared as featured speaker at the February meeting. Prior to Gord's remarks, 81 members and guests laughingly enjoyed an audiovisual "review" of Mr. Whitney's life. Prepared and presented, tongue-in-cheek, by Marshall Krolick, the slide presentation was obviously in retaliation for the Whitney-directed "roasting" Marshall received last March. Not to be outdone, however, Gord got the last laugh when he presented Marshall and President Ward Smidl each with one-half of the royal seat recently removed from his farm's outdoor rest room facility. This was described by the donor as an appropriate gift in light of the donees' "half—friendship" through the years.

The merriment over, the audience settled back to enjoy Gordon's masterful description of the Battle of Nashville. Starting with the fall of Atlanta, our speaker first sketched the campaign which preceded the battle. After the city's surrender, Hood and Sherman sparred for several weeks in Northern Georgia. Finally separating and marching away from each other, Sherman set out for Savannah and the sea while Hood moved toward Tennessee. To contest the Confederate advance, Sherman detached "The Rock of Chickamauga", George H. Thomas, with a patchwork army assembled from all over the western theater. Included were the IV and XXIII Corps from Georgia, several XVI Corps units from Mississippi under the hard-nosed A. J. Smith, a small force commanded by Steedman, and a cavalry corps led by a bright new light, James H. Wilson. By December 1, 1864, Thomas had gathered 55,000 men at Nashville. However, it was to take Wilson another ten days to organize, equip and mount the cavalry, which was to play a vital role in the forthcoming battle.

In the meantime, Hood had moved into Alabama where he paused to refit his army, a delay which gave Thomas valuable time. Hood's three corps were led by Cheatham, Stewart and S. D. Lee, while his cavalry was commanded by Forrest. On the march north, the Confederate force was severely hurt by the disastrous frontal assault at Franklin. Finally arriving before Nashville on the heels of the retreating Schofield, Hood took up an extremely poor position southeast of the city. The ease with which this line could be flanked would soon be demonstrated. As Gordon pointed out, two far better alternatives would have been to either stay south of the Harpeth River or to establish his army on the hill range between the Franklin and Hillsboro Pikes. Uncertain of what to do and too weak to assault the Nashville fortifications, Hood did nothing, becoming a sitting duck, while the raw weather punished his troops and turned his supply route into a sea of mud.

Thomas, too, was affected by the weather. Determined to attack the Confederates, he was forced to delay because of an ice storm. Behind his back, Schofield's secret messages and Grant's uninformed impatience almost resulted in the removal of "Old Pap" from command. Finally, on December 15, 1864, the weather cleared and the Federals were ready. Wilson, almost unopposed because Hood had foolishly sent Forrest to Murfreesboro, marched his cavalry out the Charlotte and Richland Pikes to gain the Southern left flank. In a feint, Steedman attacked Hood's right. At 10:00 A.M. Wilson and Smith assaulted from the west and smashed Stewart's line along the Hillsboro Pike. Only the failure of Schofield to follow up the assault prevented a complete Confederate disaster on the first day of the battle.

With his left broken, Hood withdrew that night to a new line on the Overton Hill range. However, because of faulty troop location, this position was no better than the prior one. Hood posted the bulk of his army east of the Granny White Pike, while his left, facing the massed Federal concentration, was manned by soldiers battered in the first day's fight. The result, on December 16th, was the calamity that Hood had been courting. While his right, under Lee, repulsed Union assaults on Overton Hill, his left was crushed under a three-pronged attack, again spear-headed by the cavalry. The

TO THE CAMPFOLLOWERS (LADIES)

At our February meeting a large turn-out was entertained with readings taken from Civil War literature. Betsy Davis delighted the group with "Sheridan's Ride" and "Barbara Fritchie"; Pat Newman talked on Lincoln's favorite foods (we learned that apparently he didn't have any) and she then treated us to a real Abraham Lincoln cake made from an actual recipe of Mary Lincoln's. Mary Ellen Wehler rounded out the program by reading from a Civil War poem entitled "Beechenbrook".

To those of us who will go on the battlefield tour as well as those who cannot, next month's program will be of special interest. Brooks Davis is scheduled to talk on Richmond, a preview of the tour. We cordially invite all interested ladies to attend. As usual, the meeting will be at the Book and Bottle, 17 E. Chestnut, Chicago. The date is March 14th and the time is 5:30 P.M. For reservations, write or call Mary Ellen Wehler, 244 So. Elmwood, Aurora, Illinois 60506, Phone 896-0169.

The
**SUTLER'S
WAGON**



WANTED: Any information on the 75th Regiment Ohio Volunteer infantry, especially Company A. Contact Donald E. Jensen, 335 E. Woodland Road, Lake Bluff, Illinois 60044.

WANTED: To purchase or borrow the regimental history of the 12th Pennsylvania Volunteer Cavalry. Contact Edward C. Johnson, 813 Diversey Parkway, Chicago, Illinois 60614.



1975 NEVINS-FREEMAN AWARD

The selection committee has announced that the 1975 Nevins-Freeman Award will be presented to the noted Lincoln scholar, Civil War author, and founder of the concept of Civil War Round Tables, our own Ralph G. Newman. Certainly no man's career better epitomizes the criteria upon which this award is based, a contribution of service and scholarship to the study and popularity of Civil War History. In addition to his own literary achievements, for almost thirty-five years Ralph has guided the growth and development of not only our own organization, but Round Tables and students across the country, giving unstintingly of his time and counsel.

Ralph will receive this well-deserved honor at the annual Nevins-Freeman Award Dinner, to be held this year on June 13, 1975. As is the custom, ladies will be most welcome and are cordially invited to attend what should be a gala evening. Featured on the program will be several distinguished historians, as well as friends of our guest of honor. Also planned are a lively offering of entertainment and the installation of our new officers for the coming year. More details will be made available in the future issues of the Newsletter, but be sure to save the date.

death of the gallant Shy broke the last defense on the hill which was later to bear his name and the Federals rolled up the Confederate line from west to east. Only a valiant stand by Lee held the Franklin Pike route of retreat open and Hood's Army, now a disorganized mob, fled southward.

In the next few days, Hood took his demoralized, hungry soldiers all the way back to Tupelo, Mississippi. The Federals finally gave up the pursuit on December 29, content to have witnessed, for all practical purposes, the end of the once-mighty Army of Tennessee. As Gordon pointed out, only approximately five thousand troops from its ranks were able to join Johnston in the ineffective attempt to contest Sherman's march through the Carolinas. The war in the West was over.

THE NEW BOOKS



(Compiled by Dick Clark)

Barney, William. *Flawed Victory: A New Perspective on the Civil War*. Foreword by James P. Shenton. New York: Praeger, 1975. \$7.50, paper \$3.75.

Benedict, Michael Les. *A Compromise of Principle: Congressional Republicans and Reconstruction, 1863-1869*. New York: Norton, 1974. \$15.00.

Calhoun, Harrison Mayberry. *'Twixt North and South*. Depicting the Strife, Brutality, and Heartbreak during the War Between the States in Pendleton County, West Virginia—a typical Border Area between the North and South. Edited by Harlan M. Calhoun. Franklin, W.Va.: McCoy Publishing Co., 1974. \$10.00.

Douglas, Henry Kyd. *I Rode with Stonewall*. Being chiefly the War Experiences of the Youngest Member of Jackson's Staff from the John Brown Raid to the Hanging of Mrs. Surratt, with an introduction by Philip Van Doren Stern. New York: Ballantine Books, 1974 [c1961]. Paper \$1.75.

Jones, Alfred Haworth. *Roosevelt's Image Brokers: Poets, Playwrights, and the Use of the Lincoln Symbol*. Port Washington, N.Y.: Kennikat Press, 1974. \$8.95.

Jones, Katharine M., compiler. *Heroines of Dixie: The Spring of High Hopes*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1974 [c1955]. Paper, \$1.50.

Newman, Ralph G., Editor. *Abraham Lincoln, His Story in His Own Words*. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Company, 1975. \$6.95.

Ray, Frederic. *Alfred R. Waud, Civil War Artist*. New York: Viking Press, 1974. \$16.95.

Tarbell, Ida Minerva. *The Early Life of Abraham Lincoln*. New introduction by Paul M. Angle. South Brunswick, N.J.: A.S. Barnes, 1974. \$10.00. Reprint 1896 edition.

Wiley, Bell Irvin. *Confederate Women*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1975. \$10.95.

Williamson, Joel. *After Slavery*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1975. Paper \$4.95. Hard cover issued 1965.

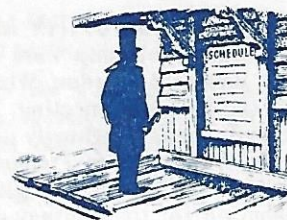


It is with deep regret that we have learned of the recent passing of two veteran campaigners of countless battlefield tours. Each was a devoted member of The Round Table despite the fact that their residency outside of the Chicago area made regular meeting attendance impossible.

Henry B. "Heinie" Bass, 77, died on Lincoln's Birthday at Enid, Oklahoma, his hometown. Heinie's ownership of the largest collection of Lincoln related poetry in the world makes the date of his death even more significant. He started the collection twenty-five years ago in memory of his son who had been killed in World War II. Through the poetry, Heinie became acquainted with Ralph Newman and The Round Table, a friendship that led to his presence on more tours than any other participant with the exception of Warren Reeder. Through his periodic Newsletter, we became even more familiar with Heinie, his beloved wife, Birdie, their family, and their ever-increasing circle of friends. Just last June, The Round Table had shown its deep affection for Heinie and its appreciation for his accomplishments by awarding him an Honorary Life Membership.

Clarence L. Johnson, one of the founders of the Peoria Civil War Round Table died January 8, 1975 while vacationing in Dunedin, Florida. Until his retirement, Clarence had been supervisor of planning for the Hiram Walker & Sons, Inc. distillery in Peoria. In addition to his activities in his own

BULLETIN BOARD



FUTURE MEETINGS

Regular meetings are held at the Chicago Bar Association, 29 South LaSalle, second Friday in each month except as noted.

March 14: Frank Rankin on "The Orphan Brigade."

April 11: Harold Simpson on "The Texas Brigade, Lee's Grenadier Guard."

April 30, May 1-4: Annual Battlefield Tour to Richmond.

May 9: Ralph G. Newman on "The Last Full Measure of Devotion — Abraham Lincoln's Incredible Funeral."

June 13: Ladies Night. Nevins-Freeman Award Dinner, and Installation of Officers.

Every Monday: Informal noon luncheon meetings at LaSalle Hotel Coffee Shop; all members welcome.

NEW MEMBERS

Marvin Goldsher, 5740 N. Sheridan Road, Chicago, Illinois 60660.

Lewis Kayton, 134 W. Elsmere, San Antonio, Texas 78212.

Bernard A. Quish, 2601 W. 81st Place, Chicago, Illinois 60632.

CHANGES OF ADDRESS

Dr. John Hope Franklin, 5805 S. Blackstone, Chicago, Illinois 60637.

Daniel Vetter, 4402 Bell Street, Apt. 202, Amarillo, Texas 79109.

Harvey Long, P. O. Box 67, Mt. Morris, Illinois 61054.



As is noted in the Book List in this issue, publication of past president and founder Ralph G. Newman's latest book has just been announced. The actual date of issuance will be March 21, 1975. The book, entitled "Abraham Lincoln, His Story in His Own Words", is a description of the life of the 16th President as he related it. In addition to the autobiographical text, which has been gathered from many sources, the volume includes connecting notes and comments by Ralph, an index, and an excellent annotated library of essential Lincolnia. Contained in a handsome slipcase, this book is a most welcome addition to any Lincoln library.

The Illinois State Historical Society will sponsor the first of two Bicentennial related meetings on May 23 and 24, 1975 at Champaign-Urbana. Hosted by the University of Illinois, the theme of this first meeting is the "American Colonial Experience in the West". Several prominent historians will be on hand to address those in attendance. The second meeting, to be held in October, will feature "The Aftermath of the Revolution in the West". Anyone wishing to present a paper on that subject at the October meeting should contact Daniel D. Holt, Field Services Supervisor, Illinois State Historical Society, Old State Capitol, Springfield, Illinois 62706.

Round Table and ours, he was also a member of the Illinois, Peoria and Stark County Historical Societies. Clarence, who was seventy-one years old at the time of his death, was originally a native of Iowa.

Our sincerest condolences go to the families of both these fine gentlemen. They will be missed by all of us.