

# THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

Volume XXXVII, Number 3

Chicago, Illinois

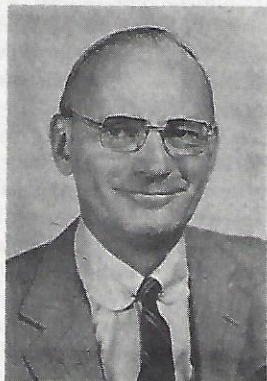
November, 1976

## BROOKS DAVIS ON "THE MISSISSIPPI MARINE BRIGADE"

On November 12th, we will have the honor of having past-president Brooks Davis return to the speakers podium after an absence of seven years. Brooks last appeared before us on March 14, 1969, when he spoke on the Battle of Perryville. His topic in November will be the Mississippi Marine Brigade.

Brooks has given his remarks the interesting subtitle of "He Who Fights and Runs Away May Live to Fight Another Day", thus indicating that the performance of this little known unit may have left something to be desired. His interest in the Mississippi Marine Brigade began when one of the descendents of a member of the brigade asked him about it. He hadn't heard of the Mississippi group before, and so began his study of this obscure unit. Brooks also mentioned that he feels safe in making this talk since so little is known about the brigade that nobody will ask questions about it. Perhaps this will encourage a few of our members to present some challenging inquiries to our good friend during the discussion period.

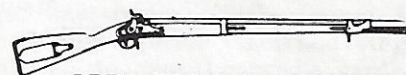
Brooks Davis, without question, is one of the corner stones of The Round Table. Through the years he has given unselfishly of his time and efforts to insure its success and growth. His own reputation as a Civil War scholar is a source of pride to all of us who share his friendship. As might be expected, Brooks is a member of many other historical organizations, such as the Louisville, South Suburban, and Salt Creek Round Tables, and the Chicago, Kentucky, and Tennessee Historical Societies. He also serves as secretary of the Stephen A. Douglas Association. Because of his intense interest in the war he has developed close relationships throughout the country and this he feels is his greatest reward. Brooks has recently spoken before the South Suburban and Salt Creek Round Tables, and will speak to the Louisville Round Table this October, and the Kansas City and St. Louis Round Tables in March.



Brooks Davis

The Mississippi Marine Brigade was unique in both concept and execution. Its object was to clear the river of Confederate vessels and snipers. The brigade was formed by Brigadier General Alfred W. Ellet in early 1863. Ellet, a resident of Illinois, had begun his Civil War career as a Captain of the 59th Illinois Infantry, and was later promoted to Lieutenant Colonel, while working with his brother, Colonel Charles Ellet, who had been ordered by the War Department to purchase vessels and convert them to rams. In November, 1862 Alfred Ellet was promoted to Brigadier

General and later placed in command of the Mississippi Marine Brigade. The brigade consisted of one infantry regiment, four squadrons of cavalry and an artillery battery. It was quartered on the ram fleet which Ellet had helped form. Although an army unit, the brigade was considered a part of the Mississippi squadron and therefore was under the direction of the Navy Department, receiving its orders from Rear Admiral Porter. Many of the troops of the Mississippi Marine Brigade were from Illinois, including detachments from the 18th, 59th, and 63rd Illinois Infantry. As Brooks will describe, the brigade saw heavy service, harassing almost everyone on or near the river, including the Union high command. In a letter dated March 9, 1864 to Major General J.B. McPherson, Brigadier General C.P. Stone states "I consider it my duty to inform you that the Marine Brigade is reported to these headquarters to have stopped at every landing thus far on its way out of the Red River, solely for the purpose of pillaging and the destruction of private property". They were obviously a maverick unit, and hard to discipline, but Admiral Porter felt they made great contributions, as did General Blair during his operations up the Yazoo in May, 1863. Blair states in Battles and Leaders that he requested to have this floating conglomerate force assigned to his command, during which time they proved very useful.



355th REGULAR MEETING

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BROOKS DAVIS

on

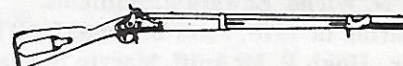
The Mississippi Marine Brigade

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Friday, November 12, 1976

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Chicago Bar Association, 29 South LaSalle Street  
Cocktails at 5:30 p.m. Dinner at 6:30 p.m.



### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

At 5:00 p.m. on November 12, 1976 at the Bar Association, just prior to the regular meeting, there will be a meeting of the Executive Committee. Several important items are on the agenda, so all current officers, trustees, committee chairmen, and all past presidents are urged to attend.

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# THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE



FOUNDED DECEMBER 3, 1940

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

## OFFICERS

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Brooks Davis  
Nevins-Freeman Award Dinner ..... Gerald M. Edelstein,  
Merlin E. Sumner

The only requirement for membership in The Round Table is a genuine interest in the Civil War and its era. For information, address Ward C. Smidl, 1104 Whippoorwill Lane, Palatine, Illinois 60067.



The State of Illinois has recently received, as a donation, a collection of Lincoln Memorabilia worth more than \$100,000.00. The donor was Robert Todd Lincoln Beckwith, 72, the only living descendant of the 16th President. Included in the collection were a rare portrait of Mrs. Lincoln, an octagonal table with inlaid portraits of Lincoln, Johnson, Grant, and Butler, and other furnishings and artworks belonging to the Lincoln family. The portrait of Mrs. Lincoln and the table will be displayed in the reception room of the Executive Mansion in Springfield. The other articles will be on exhibit in the Lincoln collection in the Illinois State Historical Library.

*from the  
Editor's pen*



The second annual National Congress of Civil War Round Tables is now history. It was attended by our hundred thirty-six delegates from twenty-nine Round Tables in twenty-six states. Those figures are all the more remarkable because the great majority of those delegates are not professional historians whose careers might be benefited by attendance at such conferences. Instead they are people from all walks of life who took the time away from their own occupations and spent their own funds to be present. If anyone might wonder why, the answer is fairly simple; because they all care, care not about financial gain or their stature in life, but care about preserving their national heritage.

The delegates spent three days listening to reports on how that heritage is being threatened by commercialism, by petty politics, and, worst of all, by apathy. The sad tales were all there; the amusement park at Manassas, the unpassed legislation for Antietam and Groveton, the tourist traps at Gettysburg, the deterioration of the Atlanta Cyclorama, and much more. Yet, there was some good signs too, a faint glimmer of hope on the horizon that all is not finally lost. On this side of the ledger were the successful repair and restoration of the Hancock Tomb by the Sons of Union Veterans, the valiant efforts, still going on, of the Jackson Civil War Round Table to have Champion Hill declared a National Battlefield Park, and most important of all, the very fact of the Congress itself.

However, it is a basic fact that conventions alone do not, and cannot accomplish startling results all by themselves. Rather they are only rallying points where plans can be formulated and efforts organized. It is when that gavel bangs down on the final session that the real work is just beginning. And that time is now! Now is when all those who could not travel to Carlisle must join in the fight if it is to be won.

Among the many resolutions passed at the Congress was one calling for the formulation, in each Round Table, of a Battlefield Preservation Committee. These committees will be guided by six regional directors to be appointed by Jerry Russell, who was elected by the Congress as its permanent Executive Director. Jerry will, in turn, coordinate the activities of the regional directors, keeping them advised of problem areas and recent developments.

For many years those interested in battlefield preservation have cited their lack of organization as a primary cause for an inability to accomplish their goals. Now, thanks to the National Congress delegates, the outline for such an organization has been established. Through it, letter writing campaigns can be mounted to advise legislative representatives and governmental agency executives of our position, self-help projects can be formed to restore neglected local monuments or historic markers, funds can be raised to support preservation activities, and above all, a strong unified voice can be utilized to educate the general public to the dangers which face us and to seek their assistance in our common fight.

All of this can happen if we only follow through on the start that has been made. We urge every Round Table to appoint a Battlefield Preservation Committee and to fill it with members who will not let Jerry Russell fight on alone, but will become involved and take action. The opportunity is before us. If we do nothing, as too often we have in the past, it will slip by and those one hundred thirty-six delegates will have accomplished nothing except a pleasant weekend in Pennsylvania. We owe them more than that.

## OCTOBER MEETING

On October 8, 1976, seventy members and guests gathered at the Bar Association to hear Dr. William W. Hassler, President of Wesley College, discuss the career of the most neglected member of the Confederate high command, Ambrose Powell Hill. Dr. Hassler began his remarks with a brief outline of Hill's life before the start of the Civil War. When the conflict broke out in 1861, Hill, a regular army officer, immediately offered his services to his native state and was appointed Colonel of the 13th Virginia. He was sent with his regiment to join Johnston at Harper's Ferry. During the First Bull Run Campaign, the 13th was stationed in Fort Beauregard and thus missed participating in the battle itself.

In the ninety days preceeding the Peninsula Campaign, Hill rose rapidly through the ranks from Colonel to Major General. Given command of the Light Division, which consisted of six brigades containing over twelve thousand men, he soon proved to be an impulsive and impetuous leader. At Beaver Dam Creek, Hill, contrary to the orders of Lee, attacked without waiting for the arrival of Jackson, who was late. The rashness of this action was compounded by Hill's failure to consult with Lee who was only one mile away. The remainder of the Seven Days battles saw Hill and his division heavily engaged as a part of Longstreet's command.

As McClellan was pushed to a haven on the James River, Hill became embroiled in the first of what was to become a series of characteristic clashes with his superiors. There was at this time serving on Hill's staff a newspaper reporter from Richmond. The stories he filed with his paper were so complimentary to the Light Division that Longstreet deemed them an insult to his other troops. The "War Horse" blamed Hill and the animosity grew to a point that a duel became a possibility. To avoid such a result, Lee transferred Hill and his command to Jackson's Corps.

However, this solution only caused a change in the cast, but not in the plot. After Second Bull Run, Hill and Jackson began a bitter running dispute that was to end only with the latter's death. As the army moved into Maryland, Stonewall ordered Hill's arrest, but the intercession of Kyd Douglas caused Hill's restoration to command in time to make his historic march from Harper's Ferry to turn the tide of battle at the Lower Bridge over Antietam Creek. As Dr. Hassler pointed out, there was right and wrong on both sides in the Hill-Jackson dispute. Lee, who realized this, wanted the matter to end, but Hill persisted in pushing the conflict to a decision. He forced Jackson to draw up charges and then prepared counter-charges of his own. Lee, determined to allow nothing which would adversely affect his army, refused to let the matter go to trial. This upset Hill even further as he wished a tribunal before which he felt he could clear his name.

The aftermath of Chancellorsville saw the controversy laid to rest with Jackson's mortal remains. In the subsequent reorganization of the army, Hill was placed at the head of the newly-formed 3rd Corps. On the first day at Gettysburg, his troops opened the battle, but Hill kept them in tight rein, thus obeying Lee's wishes not to bring on a general engagement. The next day, Hill carefully briefed Anderson on the latter's role in supporting Longstreet's attack, but then failed to properly supervise the situation and Anderson did nothing.

As the tide of the Confederacy receded, Hill suffered his most humiliating moment in the fall of 1863 at Bristoe Station. As Lee attempted to block a Federal withdrawal, Hill attacked what he thought was a gap in the Union line of march, only to be assaulted in the flank and routed by Warren's troops. Again in the Wilderness, Hill erred as, after a hard day of fighting, he failed to correct and strengthen his line after nightfall. A Federal attack the next day almost carried the field, but was halted by the



## TO THE CAMPFOLLOWERS (LADIES)

A last minute disappearance of the tape caused a second postponement of the presentation to the ladies of Roger Holloway's excellent speech on "Great Britain and the American Civil War". However, a most entertaining substitute was on hand as Margaret April presented a delightful review of Richard Harwell's new book on the letters of Margaret Mitchell, author of "Gone With the Wind".

As the tape of Mr. Holloway's remarks has now been found and, we hope, placed in a secure location, we will once again schedule it as our next program, to be held on November 12, 1976. As usual, we will meet in the Little Corporal Restaurant, State and East Wacker Drive, with bar service beginning at 5:30 p.m., to be followed by the running of the tape, and dinner. This promises to be a very interesting evening, so please join us and bring a friend. Add your reservation to your husband's card, or write or telephone Margaret April at 787-1860, 175 E. Delaware Place, Chicago, Illinois 60611.



As many of our members know, the Lincoln Herald is a fine historical quarterly published by Lincoln Memorial University under the editorship of the R. Gerald McMurtry. Mr. McMurtry is seeking original manuscripts on topics concerning Lincoln for future publication. Anyone interested in submitting an article should contact Mr. McMurtry at 910 West Rudisill Boulevard, Ft. Wayne, Indiana 46807.

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We are happy to learn that John Y. Simon, professor of history at Southern Illinois University and Executive Director of the U.S. Grant Association, Dr. G.P. Calusius, Lincoln Scholar and champion of Stephen A. Hurlbut, and Will Leonard, prominent battlefield campaigner and columnist for the Chicago Tribune, are all recovering nicely from recent hospital stays. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said for the nurses who tended them. Where are you Mother Bickerdyke when we need you?

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opportune arrival of Longstreet. From the Wilderness to Petersburg, Hill was ill and unable to perform active service. However, he returned to participate in the siege, only to be killed while attempting to rally his troops during the final Union assault, on April 2, 1865.

In summarizing the career of A.P. Hill, Dr. Hassler characterized him as an outstanding tactician, although at times careless and overly solicitous of his men. Extremely proud and hypersensitive to criticism, his personality was colored by a volatile temper, the excessive use of profane language, and an exacting self-imposed obligation of protecting the rights of himself and others. It was the latter trait which led him into conflict with his superiors while at the same time being too tolerant of his subordinates.

Ill health marked Hill's entire life and, during the Civil War, this seemed to be most prevalent at the time of battle. While none of his critics believe this to be an indication of personal cowardice, most feel that his sickness was psychosomatic. However, Dr. Hassler has arrived at a different conclusion after describing Hill's persistent symptoms to a medical expert. The latter's diagnosis is that Hill suffered from malaria, an attack of which is characteristically triggered by stress and strain, emotions which would obviously accompany impending battle.

# THE NEW BOOKS



(Compiled by Dick Clark)

Ames, Mary. *From a New England Woman's Diary in Dixie in 1865*. Westport, Connecticut. Original of 1906. \$7.25

Bennett, William W. *A Narrative of the Great Revival which prevailed in the Southern Armies during the late Civil War between the States of the Federal Union*. Harrisonburg, Virginia: Sprinkle Publications, 1976. Pbk. \$4.75. Reprint of edition of 1876.

David, Paul A. and others. *Reckoning with Slavery: A Critical Study in the Quantitative History of American Negro Slavery*. With an introduction by Kenneth M. Stampp. New York: Oxford University Press, 1976. Pbk. \$4.50. Cf. Fogel, *Time on the Cross*.

Garrison, William Lloyd. *The Letters of William Lloyd Garrison*. Vol. 4. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976. \$35.00. From Disunionism to the Brink of War 1850-1860.

Jones, James P. *Yankee Blitzkrieg. Wilson's Raid through Alabama and Georgia*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1976. \$12.00

Kurz, Louis and Alexander Allison. *Battles of the Civil War 1861-1865*. With accompanying battle narrative bound into a separate hard-cover book, the two cartoned together. Birmingham, Alabama, 1976. \$250.00

Meredith, Roy. *The World of Mathew Brady*. Northridge, California: Brooke House, 1976. \$20.00. With many photographs never before published in book form.

U.S. War Dept. *Revised Regulations for the Army of the United States, 1861*. Harrisburg, Pa.: Civil War Times Illustrated. \$10.00

Watson, Lady Elizabeth. *Fight and Survive! A History of Jackson County, Arkansas, in the Civil War*. Conway, Arkansas: River Road Press., 1974.

West, Richard S. *Mr. Lincoln's Navy*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1976. \$19.25. Original printing of 1957.

Wheeler, Richard. *Voices of the Civil War*. With an introduction by Bruce Catton. New York: Crowell, 1976. \$12.50

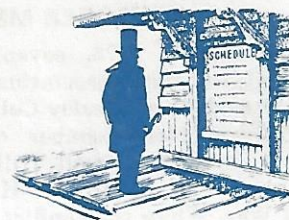
Wooster, Ralph A. *The Secession Conventions of the South*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1976. \$15.50. Reprint of the 1962 edition.

Young, Jesse B. *The Battle of Gettysburg*. A Comprehensive Narrative. Dayton, Ohio: Morningside Bookshop, 1976. \$17.50. Facsimile of 1913 edition with new foreword and new maps.

Young, John P. *The Seventh Tennessee Cavalry, CSA, a History*. Dayton, Ohio: Morningside Bookshop, 1976. \$17.50. Facsimile of 1890 printing.

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It would appear that the State of Alabama has finally acknowledged that the Confederacy lost the Civil War. For many years, the Stars and Bars has flown at the top of the highest flagpole over the State Capital in Montgomery. The State flag flew immediately below it on the same pole, while the Stars and Stripes were on a shorter pole elsewhere on the Capital grounds. Lawsuits were brought by disgruntled Unionists, but a Federal Judge ruled that there was nothing illegal in this manner of paying homage to the Lost Cause. However, criticism continued to mount and Governor George Wallace has finally yielded to the pressure. He recently directed that all three flags, will, henceforth, fly from the same pole with the American flag at the top, the State flag second and the Confederate flag third.



## BULLETIN BOARD

### FUTURE MEETINGS

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

November 12: Brooks Davis on "The Mississippi Marine Brigade."

December 10: Robert Orr Baker on "The Battle of Brices Cross Roads — June 10, 1864."

January 14: Dr. James I. Robertson, Jr. on "Lee and Jackson: The Confederacy's Premier Team."

February 11: Mark E. Neely, Jr. on "To Distinguish Myself: Lincoln and the Mexican War."

March 11: Dr. William E. Parrish on "The Bohemian Brigade: The East Covers the War in Missouri in 1861."

April 8: Elden E. (Josh) Billings on "Sherman: A Critical Character Sketch."

May 4-8: Annual Battlefield Tour to Middle Tennessee.

May 13: Dr. Richard J. Sommers on "Petersburg."

June 10: Ladies night, Nevins-Freeman Award Dinner and Installation of Officers.

Every Monday: Informal noon luncheon meetings at Wieboldt's Men's Grill, 9th Floor, State and Madison; all members welcome.

### NEW MEMBER

Francis B. Cosentino, 2810 Patton Drive, Arlington Heights, Illinois 60004.

### CHANGES OF ADDRESS

Leroy G. Andrews, 4917 N. Wolcott, Apt. 2B, Chicago, Illinois 60640.

Sidney L. Pachter, Jr., 1900 F. Street, N.W., #822, Washington, D.C. 20006.

Hugh M. Matchett, 5834 S. Stony Island Ave., Chicago, Illinois 60637.

Ralph J. Wick, 347 Shabbona Drive, Park Forest, Illinois 60466.

Richard F. Blake, 18621 103rd Ave., Sun City, Arizona 85351.

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The Superintendent of Gettysburg National Military Park has announced that the Statement for Management for the Park and National Cemetery will be available for public review. This Statement is the first step in the new National Park Service planning process, a process involving several intermediate steps and culminating in the production of a Master Plan. It is to be used to guide short and long term management of the park, and to determine the nature and extent of planning required to meet the park's management objectives, as well as to provide a general framework for directing park operations and communicating park objectives to the public. The 17-page Statement consists of the purposes, significance and land classifications of the park and National Cemetery, as well as influences on management by legislation and administrative constraints, regional, and in-park influences. It concludes with objectives for management of the park and cemetery and is supported by an extensive appendix.