

# THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

Volume XXXIX, Number 4

Chicago, Illinois

December, 1978

## BROOKS DAVIS ON THE PERRYVILLE CAMPAIGN

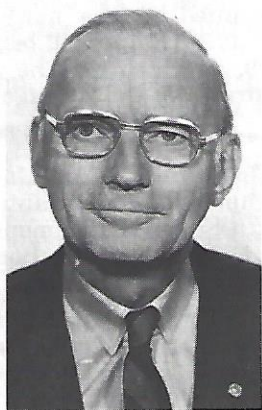
A discussion of one of the crucial battles of the Civil War by one of The Round Table's leading scholars will highlight the meeting of December 8. That evening, members and guests will have the honor of hearing Past President Brooks Davis speak on the Perryville Campaign.

The Battle of Perryville, Kentucky, which took place on October 8, 1862, was the climax of Confederate General Braxton Bragg's campaign to reoccupy Tennessee and conquer Kentucky. Chasing him as he moved northward was Union General Don Carlos Buell. Although neither commander intended to fight at Perryville, the two armies blundered into one another. Buell, in fact, was so taken by surprise that he did not even know a fight was going on until it was almost over. Half of his army never even took part.

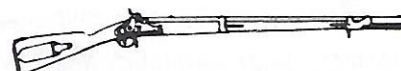
Although the fight was essentially a standoff, Bragg concluded that his campaign was a failure and drew off into eastern Tennessee. Thus, in Brooks' opinion, Perryville was one of the turning points of the Civil War. Perryville, like Antietam which took place shortly before, marked the end of a major Confederate thrust into the north. Had Bragg been successful at Perryville, and thus in his invasion, it could have made a major difference in the outcome of the War.

In his remarks, Brooks will also mention some less significant but nevertheless interesting aspects of the fight at Perryville, including the fact that it was General P. H. Sheridan's first battle as a divisional commander (Brooks feels his showing was poor). In addition, he will discuss several freaks of nature, such as the lack of water (Kentucky was in the grip of a drought) which brought both armies to Doctor's Creek where the first skirmish took place, and the strange winds which caused some troops to be unaware of what was going on only 100 yards away.

Brooks Davis, and the many contributions he has made over the years to both Civil War scholarship and The Round Table, are well known to our membership. He served as president in 1965-66, and has held numerous other positions, both official and unofficial, which have insured our organization's success and growth. In addition, he has led Round Table tours through Kentucky, the Richmond area, and the sites of the 1864 Federal campaign from Chattanooga to Atlanta. Earlier this fall he helped organize and conduct the successful Civil War Tour of Chicago.



Brooks Davis



376th REGULAR MEETING

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Brooks Davis

on

The Perryville Campaign

Friday, December 8, 1978

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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

President Glen Wiche has announced that there will be a meeting of the Executive Committee at the Bar Association at 5:00 P.M. on December 8, 1978, just prior to the regular Round Table meeting. Several important items, including the selection of the 1979 Nevins-Freeman recipient, are on the agenda. All current officers, trustees, and committee chairmen and all past presidents are urged to attend.

In addition to The Civil War Round Table, Brooks is a member of many other organizations, including: the Louisville Civil War Round Table, the Kentucky Historical Society, the Abraham Lincoln Association, the Vicksburg and Warren County Historical Society, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and the Sons of Confederate Veterans. He is also secretary-treasurer of the Stephen A. Douglas Society, past vice president of the Illinois State Historical Society, a co-founder of the South Suburban Round Table, and past department and camp commander of the Sons of Union Veterans.

Because of both his reputation for scholarship and his ability as a speaker, Brooks is often asked to address school, civic and historical groups, as well as Round Tables throughout the Midwest. His topics have ranged from Perryville to the Mississippi Marine Brigade and the development of the G.A.R. He last spoke to us, on the Mississippi Marine Brigade, in November 1976.

# THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE



FOUNDED DECEMBER 3, 1940

18 East Chestnut Street  
Chicago, Illinois 60611

## OFFICERS

President ..... Glen N. Wiche  
Senior Vice President ..... Merlin E. Sumner  
Vice President ..... Hugh P. McAniff  
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## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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Terms expiring in 1980: Dennis D. Donnellan, James H. Huber, Irwin Levin, Daniel R. Weinberg.

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Membership-Hospitality ..... Ward C. Smidl  
Publicity ..... J. Robert Ziegler  
Nominating ..... Myron Cohn  
Battlefield Tour .. Marvin Sanderman, Robert H. Franke  
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Battlefield Preservation ..... Henry Pomerantz  
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House ..... Wayne J. Anderson,  
Karl Sundstrom  
Oral History ..... Brooks Davis, C. Robert Douglas  
Tape Record Librarian ..... Steven Ziegler

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 Chicago Public Library Board has announced that it has engaged the services of James Swanson to review and authenticate the Civil War artifacts contained in the Grand Army of the Republic collection housed in the library's Cultural Center. This work has not been done in over 100 years, during which time the history of many of the items has been confused or lost. The collection was originally gathered through donations from members of the G. A. R. and is now administered by the library's special collections department under its director, Round Table member Thomas Orlando.

An impressive array of academic and lay historians will appear on the program of the first annual Confederate Historical Institute which has been scheduled for April 1921, 1979, in Montgomery, Ala. The Institute will be sponsored by Civil War Round Table Associates. Keynoting the Institute will be Dr. W. D. McCain, president emeritus of the University of Southern Mississippi, and national secretary of the Sons of Confederate Veterans. Other speakers will include Dr. Emory Thomas, The University of Georgia; Dr. Grady McWhiney, the University of Alabama; James Thompson, president of the Jackson, Mississippi Civil War Round Table; Dr. James Breedon, Southern Methodist University; William O'Donnell, past president of the Civil War Round Table of Arkansas; Stephen Head, Texas Tech University; Dr. Archie McDonald, Stephen F. Austin State University; Dr. Bobby Lovett, Tennessee State University; Albert P. Scheller, historian at Vicksburg National Military Park; Frank Rankin, past president of the Louisville Civil War Round Table; and Edward D. C. Campbell, Jr., Director of the Museum of the Confederacy, Richmond, Va. The Institute program will also include tours of the historic sites in Montgomery, including The First White House of the Confederacy. For further information, write CWRT Associates, PO Box 7388, Little Rock, Arkansas 72217.

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Chicago Mayor Michael Bilandic has announced that founder and Past President Ralph G. Newman has been appointed to the newly created position of Chicago Archivist. Ralph will begin his new duties on January 1, 1979, at which time he will relinquish his prior post as chairman of the Chicago Public Library Board.

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On October 20, 1978, a monument to the memory of the Richmond Light Infantry Blues was unveiled on North Sixth Street in Richmond, Virginia. The sculpture is the work of Wilfred O. Boettiger and honors this gallant Confederate unit which served throughout the war as Company A of the 46th Virginia.

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Once again, many of our members have been active on the speaking trail. Senior Vice-President Merlin Sumner delivered the key-note address on November 11 at the Veteran's Day observance sponsored by the re-activated Chicago Light Artillery Battery and held in Rosehill Cemetery in Chicago. Merlin also spoke before the Salt Creek Round Table on November 17. Our own December speaker and Past President, Brooks Davis, appeared before the Milwaukee Round Table on November 16 and will be the featured speaker at the March 16, 1979 meeting of the Louisville Round Table. Past President Dan Lapinski described his search for Booth's body for the Salt Creek Round Table in September and will discuss "Island Number 10" for the Louisville Round Table on December 12. Past President and Newsletter co-editor Marshall Krolick described "Lee and Longstreet at Gettysburg" for the Twin Cities Round Table on November 21. Many of our other members are also quite capable of presenting entertaining and informative programs on the Civil War for school, civic, historical, or similar organizations. Anyone knowing an organization desiring the services of a speaker should advise them to contact our Members' Resource Exchange Co-Chairmen.

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Jerry Russell, chairman of the National Congress of Civil War Round Tables has announced that the 1979 Congress will be held on October 4, 5, and 6 in Fayetteville, Arkansas. Program plans are now being formulated, but already on the schedule are battlefield tours of Pea Ridge and Prairie Grove.

## NOVEMBER MEETING

A vivid description of the career of Union General Jefferson Columbus Davis, by fellow member and past-president Gordon Whitney, highlighted the evening for the 95 members and guests who attended the meeting on November 10. In his remarks, Gordon gave particular emphasis to the events before and after the shooting of Union General William "Bull" Nelson by Davis in a Louisville hotel.

Gordon began his discussion with a review of Davis's youth and pre-Civil War activities, particularly his service in the Mexican War where he so distinguished himself at the Battle of Buena Vista in 1847 that he received a battlefield commission. After the War, Davis remained in the army and spent tours of duty at several places, including Florida. It was there that he contracted a case of yellow fever which was to recur throughout his lifetime. At Fort Sumter, where he served during the seige, Davis's keen wit and sense of humor helped keep up morale inside the beleaguered post.

After the surrender of Sumter, Davis was promoted to captain and returned to Indiana, his home state, to muster in volunteers. He sought a field command, however, and through the efforts of the powerful governor of that state, Oliver P. Morton, was appointed a colonel and sent to St. Louis. Again through Morton's influence, Davis was soon appointed an acting brigadier general and went on to earn a reputation as a fighting officer in several engagements. In January, 1862, he assumed command of a division. His leadership of that unit at Pea Ridge firmly established his military capabilities.

At this point in his discussion, Gordon turned his attention to the political and military situation in Kentucky and Indiana in mid 1862. He noted that there was rising discontent in Kentucky, which was under the heel of Union oppression, and that the Confederates felt it was the right time for an invasion. Bragg's subsequent approach brought terror to Louisville and southern Indiana and Morton wanted all Indiana troops brought back to Kentucky. The politicians and generals were at odds over the past and future conduct of the war. Morton, for instance, blamed Union General Don Carlos Buell's failures for the success of the invasion to that point.

Nelson who, although he had saved Grant's army at Shiloh, was nevertheless hated for his quick, violent temper and rudeness, was sent by Buell to Louisville to organize the local defense. He ruled the city with an iron hand, but was humiliated by the Union defeat at Richmond, Kentucky. He blamed that loss on the Hoosier troops, incurring the further wrath of Morton who was a force to be reckoned with. As Gordon described, many Hoosiers had close economic and spiritual ties with the South, and greeted the Emancipation Proclamation with hostility. Nevertheless, Morton was powerful enough to keep Indiana in the Union as well as to provide troops for the army.

The trouble between Davis and Nelson began when Davis was ordered to Louisville and assigned by Nelson to organize the home guard. Not only did Davis feel the job was beneath him, but he also believed that Nelson was incompetent. After only a few days, a meeting between the two turned into a violent quarrel and Nelson relieved Davis, ordering him to Cincinnati. Morton, who was in the city at the time, was outraged.

Davis soon returned to Louisville to join his division which had been ordered to Kentucky. Together with Morton and an attorney named Thomas Gibson, he went to see Nelson. Davis demanded satisfaction for the insult of the previous meeting. He kept pressing Nelson who finally said, "Go away, you damn puppy." At that point Davis flipped a hotel card in Nelson's face, and Nelson in turn slapped Davis and walked away. Davis asked for and received Gibson's revolver and, following Nelson, shot him through the heart. Nelson died within the hour.

Although Davis was immediately arrested and feelings against him mounted rapidly, nothing ever really came of it. Morton went to see Lincoln and although little can be definitely proved, Gordon noted that the evidence, including some altered telegrams exchanged between Morton and an aide, suggests that Morton was influential in saving Davis. No military charges were preferred (Buell wanted to hold a trial but could not spare any officers for that purpose), and the civil indictment brought against Davis was finally dropped in 1864.

The incident did not greatly affect the remainder of Davis's career. He served capably throughout the rest of the War and made the March to the Sea with Sherman. After the War he received several important assignments, including the military governorship of Alaska. However, as Gordon pointed out, the shooting did seem to affect Davis's personal life. He became more withdrawn, usually had a mournful look about him, and his previous sense of humor seemed to disappear. His frame of mind is clear from a remark he once made to a friend about the cross he had to bear.

General Jefferson Columbus Davis died in Chicago in 1879 and was laid to rest in Indianapolis. Appropriately, as Gordon said, his grave is just 50 feet from that of his old friend and colleague, Oliver Morton.

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Weir Publishing Company, operated by Jim Weir, Treasurer of the St. Louis Round Table, is offering for sale antiqued pewter copies of a sculpture entitled "A New Beginning". Each piece stands 6-3/8 inches high and 4 inches wide and depicts three stacked muskets and a Confederate cartridge box. Inscribed on the work is "Appomattox C.H., April 9, 1865". The price per set is \$19.97. To order or to obtain additional information, contact Jim at 908 Ridgetree Lane, DesPeres, Missouri 63131.

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President Carter has signed the amnesty bill restoring full citizenship to Confederate President Jefferson Davis. In remarks delivered at the time of the signing, Mr. Carter noted that this action completes the long process of reconciliation that has re-united our country following the tragic conflict between the states. A similar action, taken by former President Gerald Ford in 1976, restored the citizenship of Robert E. Lee.

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Unfortunately, many of our members have again fallen into the habit of not returning their reservation cards to indicate that they plan to attend the meetings. When we advise the Bar Association that we have 70 reservations and 90 members and guests arrive for the meeting, this puts an extreme strain on the kitchen facilities as well as our relationship with the Bar Association staff. As a result, everyone is inconvenienced. Therefore, everyone is requested to either return their reservation card if they plan to attend or, if time does not permit mailing, to call WH 4-3085. Also, Treasurer Marvin Sanderman reminds all those attending the meeting that they must sign the attendance sheet at the entrance table when they pick up their dinner ticket.

On behalf of the entire Newsletter Staff, we wish all of our readers and their families a most happy Holiday Season and a healthy and prosperous New Year. We pray that 1979 will bring to our world that which Appomattox brought to the men of 1861-1865—Peace, the most precious gift.

# THE NEW BOOKS



(Compiled by Dick Clark)

Alotta, Robert I. *Stop the Evil*. San Rafael, California: Presidio Press, 1978. \$14.95. Story of Private William H. Howe, young man executed during the Civil War as an object lesson.

Buchheit, Lee C. *Secession: The Legitimacy of Self Determination*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978. \$17.50

Canfield, Cass. *The Iron Will of Jefferson Davis*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1978. \$7.95

Carter, Robert Goldthwaite. *Four Brothers in Blue; or, Sunshine and Shadows of the War of the Rebellion*. A Story of the Great Civil War from Bull Run to Appomattox. Foreword by Frank Vandiver; introduction and index by John M. Carroll. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1978. \$15.00. Reprint of the 1913 edition.

Fehrenbacher, Don E. *The Dred Scott Case: Its Significance in American Law and Politics*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1978. \$19.95

Ferris, Norman B. *The Trent Affair: A Diplomatic Crisis*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1977. \$14.95

Johnson, Ludwell H. *Division and Reunion: America, 1848-1877*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1978. \$11.95

Kennerley, Paul. *White Mansions: A Tale from the American Civil War, 1861-1865*. Music and lyrics by Paul Kennerley. Beverly Hills, California: A & M Records, Inc., 1978. Phonorecord, 2 sides, with illustrated narrative booklet. \$9.95

Kurtz, Wilbur G. "Technical Adviser: The Making of Gone With the Wind: The Hollywood Journals of Wilbur G. Kurtz," edited by Richard Barksdale Harwell. *The Atlanta Historical Journal*, vol. 22, no. 2 (Summer 1978). \$5.00

Martin, Robert Hugh. *A Boy of Old Shenandoah*. Parsons, West Virginia: McClain Printing Co., 1977. \$7.50

Miller, Ed. *The Monitor, The Ship that Launched a Modern Navy*. Thurnwood, New Jersey. Caroline House. 1978

Paxton, Elisha Franklin. *The Civil War Letters of General Frank "Bull" Paxton: A Lieutenant of Lee and Jackson*. Edited by John G. Paxton. Hillsboro, Texas: The Hill Junior College Press, 1978. \$8.50

Schildt, John W. *Roads to Gettysburg*. Parsons, West Virginia: McClain Printing Company, 1978.

Weinart, Richard. *The Story of Fort Monroe*. Thurnwood, New Jersey: Caroline House.

Wheeler, Richard. *Sherman's March*. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, \$10.95

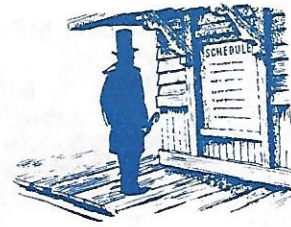
Winsor, Bill. *Texas in the Confederacy: Military Installations, Economy and People*. Hillsboro, Texas: The Hill Junior College Press, 1978. \$12.50

Wright, Gavin. *The Political Economy of the Cotton South: Households, Markets, and Wealth in the Nineteenth Century*. New York: Norton, 1978. \$10.95

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Mrs. John J. Stewart, great-granddaughter of Varina Howell Davis, First Lady of the Confederacy, has donated to the Smithsonian Museum of History and Technology First Lady's Hall a collection of Mrs. Davis' jewelry. Included are her engagement ring, a matched set of crystal brilliants worn on her wedding day, an enameled pocket watch trimmed with pearls, which was a gift from her husband, and a diamond and ruby pin given to Mrs. Davis by the women of the Confederacy.

## BULLETIN BOARD



### FUTURE MEETINGS

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

December 8: Brooks Davis on "The Perryville Campaign".

January 12: Dr. Grady McWhiney on "Confederate Generals—Their Strengths and Weaknesses".

February 9: Dr. Mark E. Neeley on "Has The Lincoln Theme Been Exhausted?"

March 9: Chris Calkins on "The Appomattox Campaign".

April 6: William A. Frassanito on "Antietam: The Photographic Legacy of America's Bloodiest Day."

May 2-6: Annual Battlefield Tour—Shiloh and Northern Mississippi.

May 11: To be announced.

June 8: 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.

Last Tuesday of each month: Informal noon luncheon meetings at Caravelle Motel, River Road and Bryn Mawr Avenue, Rosemont; all members welcome.

### NEW MEMBER

Richard W. McAdoo, 400 Douglas, Apt. 2, Elgin, Illinois 60120.

### CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Al Meyer, 4750 N.W. 22nd Court, Lauderhill, Florida 33313.

Gordon Whitney, RR #5, Country Estates, Madison, Indiana, 47250.

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Once again, the Confederate Memorial Literary Society is soliciting entries for its annual awards for historical research and writing on the period of the Confederate States. Each year, the Jefferson Davis Award is given for book-length narrative history, the Founders Award is presented for work in the area of research or editing of primary sources resulting in publication, and the Award of Merit is given for a published article or monograph. Deadline for entries for the 1978 competition is March 1, 1979, and the presentation ceremony will be held June 3rd at the Museum of the Confederacy in Richmond. To enter the competition or to obtain additional information, contact the Museum of the Confederacy, 1201 East Clay Street, Richmond, Virginia 23219.

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We are very sorry to learn of the recent death of Colonel J. G. Seabourne, Past President of the District of Columbia Round Table. Colonel Seabourne, who was 82 years old, suffered a heart attack in October and was subsequently confined in the intensive care unit of Walter Reed Hospital until his death. He had accompanied us on several past battlefield tours and was a noted expert on the Washington area battlefields, especially Brandy Station.