

THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

Volume XXXIX, Number 5

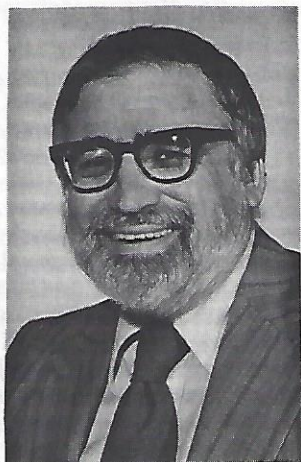
Chicago, Illinois

January, 1979

GRADY McWHINEY ON THE CONFEDERACY'S 'BEST' GENERALS

The Round Table meeting on January 12 promises to be controversial. That evening, fellow member and University of Alabama history professor Grady McWhiney will discuss a subject about which many have some very definite opinions, "The Confederacy's 'Best' Generals." However, those who have heard Dr. McWhiney during one of his several previous appearances before The Round Table know they are in for an interesting and informative as well as controversial evening.

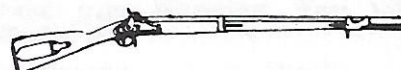
In dealing with his subject, Dr. McWhiney intends to begin by reviewing some of the views of Confederate generals expressed by their contemporaries, the men who supposedly knew the strengths and weaknesses of their leaders. Then, he will survey the secondary literature and show the opinions scholars have expressed on the relative merits of Southern leaders. Finally, he will attempt to analyze the actual battle records of the principal Confederate army commanders, comparing the amount of damage they inflicted upon the enemy against how many casualties their own troops suffered. In his opinion, this quantitative approach is merely another way of examining a highly debatable subject. Dr. McWhiney says that although his tentative conclusions about this subject may well be controversial, they are meant to be suggestive rather than determinative.



Dr. Grady McWhiney

Grady McWhiney currently serves as Professor of History and Chairman of the Department at the University of Alabama and is also Director and Distinguished Senior Fellow of the Center for the Study of Southern History and Culture at that University. Without question he has established himself as one of the leading figures in Civil War history. The many books he has either authored or edited include: *Reconstruction and the Freedmen* (1963); *Grant, Lee, Lincoln and the Radicals: Essays on Civil War Leadership* (1964); *Braxton Bragg and Confederate Defeat* (1969), for which he received the American Historical Association's Pacific Coast Branch Award and the Harry S. Truman Award; *To Mexico with Taylor and Scott* (1969); and *Southerners and Other Americans* (1973).

articles, many of which deal with subjects other than the Civil War. Among these are: "Louisiana Socialists in the Early Twentieth Century: A Study of Rustic Radicalism,"



377th REGULAR MEETING

Dr. Grady McWhiney

on

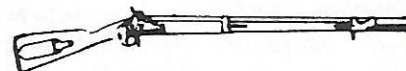
Confederate Generals—Their Strengths and Weaknesses

Friday, January 12, 1979

Chicago Bar Association
29 South LaSalle Street

Cocktails at 5:30 p.m.

Dinner at 6:30 p.m.



Journal of Southern History (1954); "The Ghostly Legend of the Ku Klux Klan," *Negro History Bulletin* (1951); "Were the Whigs a Class Party in Alabama?" *Journal of Southern History* (1957); "Controversy in Kentucky: Braxton Bragg's Campaign in 1862," *Civil War History* (1960); "Who Whipped Whom? Confederate Defeat Reexamined," *Civil War History* (1965); "The Mexican War and the Civil War," *A Guide to the Sources of American Military History* (1975); "Jefferson Davis and the Art of War," *Civil War History* (1975); and "The Revolution in Nineteenth-Century Alabama Agriculture," *Alabama Review* (1978).

Dr. McWhiney was born in Shreveport, Louisiana. Following service in the U.S. Marine Corps, he received a B.S. from Centenary College, an M.A. from Louisiana State University, and a Ph.D. from Columbia University in 1960. He has taught at a number of universities in this country and Canada, including Northwestern University; University of California, Berkeley; University of British Columbia; Tulane; University of Michigan; and Wayne State University. He serves on the editorial board of Papers of Jefferson Davis and the Ulysses S. Grant Association, the executive council of the Southern Historical Association, and is currently president of the Alabama Historical Association.

Dr. McWhiney's previous talks to our Round Table have included discussions of General Braxton Bragg, and, in 1971, "Jefferson Davis and His Generals."

THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE



FOUNDED DECEMBER 3, 1940

18 East Chestnut Street
Chicago, Illinois 60611

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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 Twelfth Annual Reenactment of the Battle of New Market will be held Sunday, May 13, 1979, at the New Market Battlefield Park in New Market, Virginia. Co-hosts along with the Battlefield Park will be the Sons of Veterans Reserve and the Army of Northern Virginia. Participation in this year's event will again be by pre-registration. Anyone desiring additional information or details on registration should write to New Market Battlefield Park, P.O. Box 1864, New Market, Virginia 22844.

Although the National Parks Omnibus Bill passed during the last session of Congress, it did so without provisions which would have expanded the Manassas National Battlefield Park. Park expansion was included in the legislation, but lame duck Virginia Senator William Scott exercised a senator's privilege to put a "hold" on that portion, thereby eliminating it from the voting. Expansion of Manassas has been the subject of a longstanding clash between preservationists and the Prince William County Board of Supervisors. The Board has maintained that expansion would prevent industrial development and reduce the tax roles. Of particular concern is the fact that the Brawner Farm is not now part of the Park. In the words of the Director of the National Park Service: "The Brawner Farm is historically extremely significant. The Farm and adjacent Gibbon's Wood were the site of one of the Civil War's bloodiest engagements (Groveton). Casualties on both sides reached 2,300 out of 7,300 men engaged. The vortex of the fighting which involved musketry at point blank range was the Brawner Farm and orchard. Tactically the engagement was a standoff, demonstrating the determination and heroism of both sides. The fighting at the Brawner Farm was the bloody opening of the two-day decisive Battle of Second Manassas." Current plans call for the site of the Farm to be used as a highway bypass. Preservationists are hopeful of reintroducing the Manassas Battlefield Park expansion legislation in the next session. We urge you to advise your own and other influential Representatives and Senators of your support for this vital project.

Throughout the summer months, the Lincoln Heritage Trail, which winds for 2200 miles through Kentucky, Indiana, and Illinois, is one of the most popular tourist attractions in the country. However, many people do not realize that events continue along this trail during the winter also. For example, from January 21 through February 25, the Illinois State Museum in Springfield will host the Illinois Crafts 1979 Exhibition. For more information on this and other programs, contact the Lincoln Heritage Trail Foundation, 702 Bloomington Road, Champaign, Illinois 61820.

After leaving the pre-war army, and before taking up residence in Galena, U. S. Grant resided with his family on a farm west of St. Louis. The future general named this farm, located on 80 acres given to him by his father-in-law, "Hardscrabble", which proved to be a fitting description of the lack of economic success Grant endured during the six months that he resided on the farm. The modest, but solidly built, two-story log home in which the family lived has been preserved, and, for many years, has been located on the 280 acre Grant's Farm amusement park. The home has now been restored, and, for the first time, the interior is now open for touring by visitors. The recent dedication ceremonies included reactivated Civil War units, Milwaukee's First Brigade Band, speeches by various politicians, and an appearance by actor Tom Zito, who specializes in portraying Grant in performances at the Gallery Theater in Galena. The restoration of the home was completed under the direction of John Y. Simon, Professor of History at Southern Illinois University and Director of the U. S. Grant Association. The interior furnishings are all antiques of the period, matching as closely as possible to items known to have been placed in the house by Mrs. Grant. Tours of the entire Grant's Farm complex are given free of charge from 9:00 A.M. to 11:00 A.M., and from 1:00 P.M. to 3:00 P.M. Thursday through Sunday. However, reservations must be made well in advance.

DECEMBER MEETING

The crucial battle of Perryville, or Chaplin Hills, Kentucky, was Past President and fellow member Brooks Davis's subject when he addressed 77 members and guests at the meeting on December 8. In his remarks, Brooks pointed out that the battle marked the end of a Confederate invasion of Kentucky. He emphasized that the failure of that invasion, along with Confederate failures at Antietam and Corinth, spelled the end of the Confederacy long before Gettysburg.

In setting the stage for the battle itself, Brooks explained that the Confederate fortunes of war in the West in the summer of 1862 were at a low point. Thus, General Braxton Bragg and others conceived the idea of a bold invasion of the North. Lee was to advance into Maryland, Bragg into Kentucky, and Van Dorn to Corinth. The goal, especially in Kentucky, was to gain both supplies and recruits. More importantly, it was to boost the morale of the South.

Bragg was to be assisted by General Kirby Smith, who, advancing from eastern Tennessee, occupied Lexington, Kentucky, by September 2 and threatened Louisville. Bragg, meanwhile, was coming up from Chattanooga, with Union General Don Carlos Buell in pursuit. Although he was achieving considerable tactical success, Bragg's appeal for Kentuckians to join him was unsuccessful. Thus, at this point he halted his military activities and turned to politics, going to Frankfort for the inauguration of the secessionist governor Richard Hawes. In the meantime, Buell was able to slip by and into Louisville on September 25.

After a short period of status quo, Buell decided to set out in pursuit of Bragg in early October, moving toward Bardstown in the hope of turning back the Confederate left and thus cutting off their retreat. Kentucky was very dry at his time which forced Buell's troops to march in columns, so as to stay near water supplies, and prevented him from knowing exactly where the enemy was. Bragg, whose army was divided, as some of his forces were near Frankfort, also did not know the exact whereabouts of Buell. Thus, both sides were not really prepared for the battle of Perryville which took place on October 8.

It began with a Confederate attack on Philip Sheridan's troops who were camped on Doctor's Creek west of the town. The subsequent fighting took place on the Union left which was weakened by the failure of McCook and Gilbert to link up due to the rugged country. About 2 p.m., Confederate General Wharton launched an attack, advancing in parade ground formation. Brooks noted that it was early in the war and thus such formations were still being used. Although the Confederates met point blank artillery fire, they did bend back the Federal line and killed several key Union commanders.

Meanwhile, intense fighting between Rousseau and Buckner, both of whose units were made up largely of Kentuckians, resulted in Rousseau and the Federal line being pushed back about a mile. Gilbert's forces finally moved up and eventually the line held, thus bringing the battle to an end. There were about 4300 Federal and 4100 Confederate casualties.

Crittenden, who was only about three miles away, never took part in the fighting. Brooks explained that due to some tricky winds, which screened the battle noise, neither Crittenden nor Buell really knew what was going on. In assessing the performance of Sheridan, who was a new brigadier, Brooks said that in his opinion Sheridan failed to grasp the need for offensive movement at the right time.

After the battle, Bragg and Smith began a retreat from Kentucky and Buell let them go, claiming that his troops were too green and that the Confederates could have made a strong stand at any point. In concluding, Brooks noted that as a result of the battle and its aftermath, Buell was soon relieved for his failure to pursue the Confederates.

1979 NEVINS-FREEMAN AWARD

The Executive Committee has announced that the recipient of the Nevins-Freeman Award for 1979 will be our own Past President and distinguished Civil War historian E. B. "Pete" Long. Pete, whose contributions to the field of Civil War scholarship and to Civil War Round Tables across the country are legend, is currently Professor of American Studies at the University of Wyoming in Laramie. The ceremonies honoring him will be held on June 8, 1979. The exact details and location of the program, which will also include the installation of the new officers of The Round Table, are being formulated and will be announced in the near future.



A most bizarre tale of buried treasure, with a Civil War background, has been revealed by a recent magazine article. According to the story, a shipment of twenty-six 50 pound bars of gold, valued at 2.8 million dollars, was sent, in June of 1863, from Wheeling, West Virginia to Philadelphia. To disguise the nature of the cargo, the gold bars were painted black and buried beneath a false wagon bottom. When the shipment and its accompanying army escort reached the town of Clarion, in Elk County, Pennsylvania, it was delayed by news of the Confederate invasion of Pennsylvania, and also by the illness of the escort's commanding officer. The journey was finally resumed and the expedition entered the mountainous country to the east of Clarion. For over two months, nothing further was heard from it, as it appeared to disappear from the face of the earth. Finally, an army sergeant, who had been a member of the expedition, staggered into the town of Lock Haven in Central Pennsylvania. He immediately related a tale of ambush in the mountains, which had resulted in the death of all of the other nine members of the escort. A Board of Inquiry was held by the army, but no charges were ever filed against the sergeant. However, he was soon transferred to a remote military post in Arizona. Later, while intoxicated, he sometimes boasted of knowing the hiding place of the gold, but he never returned to the East and eventually died while still a soldier. For several years, the government conducted unsuccessful searches for the gold, but eventually abandoned the efforts. Plane and bus schedules for Clarion, Pennsylvania are available on request, and the ticket line forms on the right.

Among the many historical attractions located in the State of Illinois is the Vermilion County Museum, which is located in the beautiful Danville home of Civil War Surgeon Dr. William Fithian. In addition to his medical duties, Dr. Fithian also served in the State Legislature and was a friend of Abraham Lincoln, who spent a night in the home during the Lincoln-Douglas debates. Among the many displays in the Museum, in addition to Dr. Fithian's medical office, are a photographic history of the county, and several artifacts relating to Joseph G. (Uncle Joe) Cannon, who served in the U.S. House of Representatives for fifty years and was Speaker of the House from 1903 to 1911. The Museum is located at 116 North Gilbert Street, Danville, and is open daily, except Monday, Christmas and Thanksgiving. There is a small admission charge.

John E. Bakeless, noted Civil War author and historian, died recently at Yale-New Haven Hospital at the age of 83. Mr. Bakeless either wrote or edited 19 books on such diverse subjects as Daniel Boone, Louis and Clark, and the signers of the Declaration of Independence. Espionage was the topic of his most notable works in the field of Civil War literature, for he was the author of "Spies of the Confederacy" and "Spies of the Union".

THE NEW BOOKS

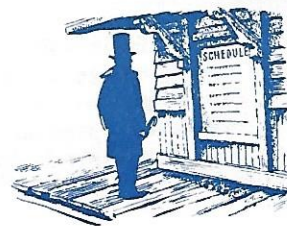


(Compiled by Dick Clark)

- Adams, Michael C. C. *Our Masters the Rebels: A Speculation on Union Military Failure in the East, 1861-1865*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978. \$12.50
- Belz, Herman. *Emancipation and Equal Rights: Politics and Constitutionalism in the Civil War Era*. New York: Norton, 1978. \$10.95
- Carter, Samuel. *The Cavalry: Union and Confederate Troops and Their Leaders in the Civil War*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1978. \$15.00
- Cowles, Calvin D., compiler. *The Official Military Atlas of the Civil War*. Introduction by Richard Sommers. New York: Arno Press/Crown Publishers, 1978. \$60.00. A creditable reprint in color, 10% reduction in size, of the Atlas to Accompany the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies.
- Donald, David H. *Liberty and Union: The Crisis of Popular Government 1830-1890*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1978. \$12.50
- Harrison, Lowell H. *The Antislavery Movement in Kentucky*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1978. \$4.95
- Jones, J. William. *The Life and Letters of General Robert E. Lee*. Harrisonburg, Virginia: Sprinkle Publications, 1978. \$15.95; paper \$9.95. Reprint of the issue of 1906.
- MacLean, David G., editor. *Prisoner of the Rebels in Texas: The Civil War Narrative of Aaron T. Sutton*. Decatur, Indiana: Americana Books, 1978. \$12.50
- Perdue, Theda. *Slavery and the Evolution of Cherokee Society, 1540-1866*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1979. \$17.50
- Rampp, Lary and Donald. *Civil War in the Indian Territory*. Austin, Texas: Presidial Press, 1978. \$9.95
- Robinson, John W. *Los Angeles in Civil War Days, 1860-1865*. Los Angeles: Dawson Book Shop, 1977. \$20.00
- Salisbury, Allen. *The Civil War and the American System. America's Battle with Britain, 1860-1876*. New York: Campaigner Publications/University Editions. Paper \$5.95
- Thompson, Jerry Don. *Vaqueros In Blue and Gray*. Austin, Texas: Presidial Press, 1978. \$9.50
- Wheeler, Richard. *The Siege of Vicksburg*. New York: Crowell, 1978. \$10.95

One of the casualties of the recent energy crisis was the flame of the Eternal Peace Light Memorial on the Gettysburg National Battlefield Park. The Memorial, built as a symbol of peace and national unity, was funded by donations and built with stone from both Northern and Southern states. Completed in 1938, it was dedicated on the 75th anniversary of the battle. Principal speaker at the ceremony was the then President, Franklin D. Roosevelt. However, because of the flame's high consumption of natural gas, the National Park Service was forced to extinguish it in 1973. However, much to their credit, the Board of Directors of the Gettysburg Area Chamber of Commerce recently began a project to rekindle the flame without the use of natural gas. Final plans, which have now been approved by the National Park Service, call for the use of an electrically stimulated sodium vapor light inside a giant lighting fixture. The bulb itself weighs over 800 pounds. The rededication and relighting ceremony, to which the present governors of the original contributing states have been invited, is now scheduled for July 1, 1979.

BULLETIN BOARD



FUTURE MEETINGS

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

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

February 9: Dr. Mark E. Neeley on "Lincoln's Image: Photographs, Prints and Cartoons of the 1860's".

March 9: Dr. Herman Hattaway on "Stephen D. Lee".

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: Chris Calkins on "The Appomattox Campaign".

June 8: Nevins-Freeman Award Dinner and installation of officers. Recipient of Award: E.B. "Pete" Long.

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 MEMBERS

John C. Eby, c/o Harris Bank, 111 W. Monroe Street, Chicago, Illinois 60626.

Bruce Erskine, 7223 Oak Avenue, River Forest, Illinois 60305.

Charles H. Jorgensen, 1219 Morton Avenue, Elgin, Illinois 60120.

Alexis A. Pajich, 215 E. Euclid Avenue, Arlington Heights, Illinois 60004.

Torn Parfitt, 719 Ambleside Drive, Deerfield, Illinois 60015.

John L. Satterlee, 6 Lambert Lane, Springfield, Illinois 62704.

Jennie P. Schnell, 506 N. Pine Avenue, Arlington Heights, Illinois 60004.

Founder and past President Ralph G. Newman was the featured speaker at the November 13th meeting of The Lincoln Group of New York. Ralph's subject was the difficulty in collecting authentic Civil War and Lincoln memorabilia.

At its December meeting the Executive Committee approved Senior Vice President Merlin Sumner's proposal for a book raffle to be held at each meeting. Raffle tickets will be sold at the price of \$1.00 each, and the holder of the winning ticket will receive a specially selected book on the Civil War era. Proceeds of the raffle will be donated to the Civil War Sites Fund, administered by *Civil War Times Illustrated*. This most worthy cause provides funds for the acquisition of battlefield land not already a part of the National Park Service and threatened by commercial or other development. We strongly urge our members and all others interested in the preservation of our national heritage to support not only our book raffle, but the Civil War Sites Fund itself by individual contributions.