

THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

Volume XL, Number 7

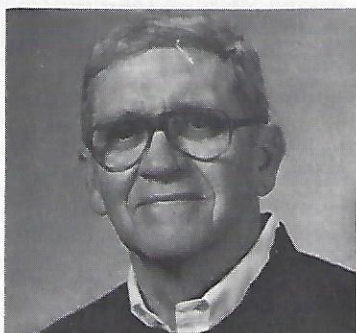
Chicago, Illinois

March, 1980

DR. JOHN G. BARRETT ON FROM GLORY TO DISREPUTE: SHERMAN IN THE CAROLINAS

In February, 1865, William T. Sherman began moving north from Savannah into the Carolinas. As they had done in Georgia, Sherman's men burned and looted as they marched, turning countryside and city into a wasteland. Describing this campaign at The Round Table meeting on March 14 will be Dr. John G. Barrett, a man who knows the region and what happened there during the Civil War in intimate detail.

When Sherman left Savannah on February 1, he had some 60,000 veterans—when he reached North Carolina he would be reinforced by 21,000 more under Schofield. Opposing him the Confederates had the remains of the Army of Tennessee and sundry home-guard and cavalry units—about 30,000 in all. Joe Johnston was brought out of retirement to try and stop him, but it was to no avail.



Dr. John G. Barrett

Sherman's line of march was through swampy lowland regions cut by many rivers. In rainy winter weather the terrain was almost impassable. And yet Sherman advanced through South Carolina as rapidly as he had gone across Georgia, corduroying roads, building bridges, and fording icy rivers as he came. The capital, Columbia, was captured and burned on February 17 (the Federal troops maintained the burning was an accident). Sherman kept moving north and sliced the railroad lines that led to Charleston. That city soon fell into their hands.

Once Sherman reached North Carolina, the devastation that marked his passage across South Carolina was held to a minimum. Johnston made one last unsuccessful fight—at Bentonville on March 19—and when news of Lee's surrender reached him, he too surrendered.

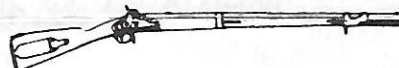
Dr. Barrett's talk will develop the theme that General Sherman applied total war to the Carolinas not out of a sense of cruelty and barbarism, but out of the sincere conviction that it was the most effective means at hand to end the conflict. With him, Barrett says, total war was a strategic not vindictive matter. The subtitle of his talk—From Glory to Disrepute—comes from Secretary Stanton's charge in April, 1865, that Sherman had deliberately disobeyed Lincoln's orders concerning surrender negotiations and that for "bankers' gold" he might allow Jefferson



389th REGULAR MEETING
JOHN G. BARRETT
ON
FROM GLORY TO DISREPUTE:
SHERMAN IN THE CAROLINAS

FRIDAY, MARCH 14, 1980

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



Davis, who was fleeing south at the time, to escape.

John G. Barrett, who has been teaching history at the Virginia Military Institute in Lexington since 1953, was born and raised in North Carolina. He received his BA from Wake Forest College and his MA and PhD degrees from the University of North Carolina. He has been a visiting scholar at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, a visiting professor at Washington and Lee University, and served on the summer school faculty at both the University of Virginia and Tulane.

Dr. Barrett is the author of several books, including: *Sherman's March Through the Carolinas*, *The Civil War in North Carolina*, *Letters of a New Market Cadet* (co-editor), *Yankee Rebel: The Civil War Journal of Edmund Dewitt Patterson* (editor), and *North Carolina as a Civil War Battleground*. He is currently working on *The Papers of Zebulon Baird Vance*, and *North Carolina Civil War Documentary*.

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. Smid, 1104 Whippoorwill Lane, Palatine, Illinois 60067.



Although the tickets for the free Battlefield Tour which The Round Table is raffling off indicate that the drawing will be held at the March meeting, it has been decided to hold the drawing at the April meeting instead since the Tour itself has been moved back two weeks, to May 14-18. Thus, there is still plenty of time to get your ticket, either at the March or April meeting or by mail. To obtain a ticket by mail, write to Marv Sanderman, Treasurer, Civil War Round Table, 18 E. Chestnut, Chicago 60611. Tickets are \$5 each.

Ford's Theater in Washington, D.C. recently presented the American premier of the one-man play, "Mister Lincoln," by Herbert Mitgang. The play starred British actor Roy Dotrice, an eight-year veteran of the Royal Shakespeare Company. Dotrice prepared for the role by immersing himself in Lincoln biography and history as well as corresponding via cassette tape with Mitgang.

The play begins with Lincoln telling of his assassination, and he relives his life in those last moments before death, evoking a host of characters from Civil War generals and freed blacks to Mary Todd and his cabinet officers. Dotrice uses the Library of Congress version of the Gettysburg Address in the play (he spent two days at Washington's Union Station studying the Address inscribed on the wall there).

"Mister Lincoln" had its world premier in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada last October where it was seen by Frankie Hewitt, executive producer of Ford's Theater. Although the play opened in Washington with low advance sales, it soon broke a record in one-day box office sales. It has received considerable acclaim from the critics, as well as audiences. A performance was taped for a TV special, and the play will soon open on Broadway.

The Civil War Collection in the Grand Army of the Republic Memorial Hall on the second floor of the Chicago Public Library Cultural Center reopened on February 8. Original documents, maps, military equipment and other artifacts are featured in the ongoing display. On view for the first time are materials recently donated from the personal library of Civil War historian Bruce Catton, who died in 1978.

Marking the reopening was a lecture on February 11 by our own member Marshall D. Krolick. Marshall discussed "The Soldier in the Civil War," and included in his talk an exhibition of a Civil War uniform and the equipment used by the average Union soldier.

The materials in the G.A.R. collection were carefully restored and reinstalled by the Special Collections Department at the Cultural Center. They received assistance from the Document Conservation Center in Atlanta, Georgia. In addition, some artifacts, including drums, leather items, musical and medical instruments and some weapons were restored by James L. Swanson, an American history student at the University of Chicago.

Among the material on display are documents, badges, photos and other artifacts of the G.A.R.; photos, autographed letters, personal memoirs and other artifacts focusing on Ulysses S. Grant; manuscript maps; early infantry manuals; and a surgeon's kit. The Catton collection includes books, recordings, regimental histories and photos he took.

A Confederate double-barreled cannon that never worked well enough to be fired at the Yankees has been enshrined in a park in Athens, Georgia. The cannon, with two four-foot barrels, was designed by John Gilleland, a contractor and private in an elite home-guard unit for businessmen not eligible for service in the Confederate Army. The idea was that if you fired two cannon balls connected by a chain they would sweep across the battlefield knocking down numerous soldiers. The cannon failed because its designers could not get both barrels to fire simultaneously even though they had a common breech. Thirty-six local citizens raised the \$350 it cost to cast the weapon at an Athens foundry.

FEBRUARY MEETING

"A monumental, dramatic, bloody battle that deserves more attention than it has received"—that was the way Dr. James L. McDonough introduced the Battle of Stones River to the 77 members and guests who attended The Round Table meeting on February 8. He then went on to describe the final day of that engagement in detail.

In explaining the significance of Stones River, Dr. McDonough noted that the casualty figures were similar to those at Shiloh and that the ratio of losses was greater than at Chancellorsville and Fredericksburg. He also pointed out that the Union victory helped to offset their loss at Fredericksburg and that it showed that Confederate General Bragg could not successfully command. But most importantly, he said, the Federal army had prevented a Confederate victory at Stones River—and the Union army could not stand another defeat. As Lincoln said to Union General Rosecrans after the fight, "the nation could scarcely have lived without a victory at Stones River."

McDonough briefly discussed the prelude to the battle and the first day's fighting. The Union army left Nashville on December 26, 1862, with about 44,000 men—they outnumbered the Confederates by about 7,000. Both Rosecrans and Bragg had the same plan at Stones River. Each intended to strike with their left early in the morning on the same day—December 31. However, the rebels struck first, hitting Union General McCook with, as Dr. McDonough described it, "pile-driving force." McCook was forced back and in a short time, two-thirds of the Federal right wing was wrecked.

At this point, victory was within Bragg's grasp if he could follow up. However, Bragg made inefficient use of his manpower—the reserves were already committed to fill gaps and thus unavailable for a final push. Breckinridge could have been used to pound the weakest part of the Union line, but Bragg felt it would be too late to commit him by the time he crossed the river. In McDonough's opinion, decisive action to assist Hardee (who hit McCook) should have been taken no later than noon. But, according to McDonough, the worst mistake was the piecemeal manner in which troops were fed into battle—as much as one and one-half hours occurred between assaults.

On January 1, Union troops crossed the river and took a position on the high ground. Bragg had ignored the terrain before, but now, despite the objections of his subordinates, he ordered Breckinridge to make a frontal assault across 1,000 yards of open ground. In McDonough's opinion, Bragg should have appreciated the importance of that high ground earlier since he had been in the area for awhile. At the least, he should have avoided a frontal assault and taken steps to neutralize the Federal artillery.

The Confederates, who outnumbered the Federal forces east of the river by several thousand, formed for the assault at 4 a.m. on January 2. About 150 yards from the right flank of the Union line, the Confederates halted and unleashed a volley; they then made a dash for the lines. When they were about 60 yards away, the Union troops fired but failed to arrest the charge. Hand to hand fighting took place and finally the Union troops fled to the rear. On the other flank, the left, the Federal forces had more success. They stopped the Confederate charge temporarily, but finally their position was taken and they too fell back. The retreat soon turned into a shambles; in the space of about 30 minutes, three Yankee brigades were routed.

Once again it seemed that Confederate victory was at hand. However, the Confederates had moved to a point

where they were exposed to Federal artillery which now began firing into them from across the river. The soggy river bottom became a death trap, and, as the slaughter by artillery continued, Crittendon's troops began pouring in rifle fire. At last, the Federal troops mounted a strong counterattack, splashed back across the river, and regained their original position.

In Dr. McDonough's opinion, the attack on January 2 was a tragic one because it had no chance to succeed—the Confederates only got as far as they did because the Union forces were badly used. The battle was, he said, another example of generals playing with the lives of men. As a participant in the battle said, "It was a terrible affair."

In response to a question following his talk, Dr. McDonough said that although there have been some minor modifications, plans to expand Stones River National Military Park are progressing well. The Park Service intends to acquire a buffer zone around the artillery site north of the battlefield; a buffer zone around the western end to preserve Union and Confederate trenches; and a buffer zone along the south lanes of U.S. 41 in order to protect the Hazen monument. McDonough said Congress is expected to begin considering the expansion of Stones River in April, and urged Round Table members to write their Congressmen in support of the plan.

Noted Civil War historian and Honorary Award Life Member of The Civil War Round Table Avery Odelle Craven died January 21 at the age of 93. Mr. Craven, a University of Chicago professor of American history from 1928 until his retirement in 1952, received his master's degree from Harvard in 1914 and a doctorate from the U. of C. in 1923.

He began his teaching career in 1920 at the Michigan State University and had been a professor of American history at the University of Sydney, Australia, and at Cambridge University in England. He also lectured in Australia and Japan and was a visiting professor at many American universities.

Craven was a frequent contributor to history journals and the author of several books on the Civil War era, including: *Edmund Ruffin, Southern* (1932); *The Repressive Conflict 1830-1861* (1939); *The Coming of the Civil War* (1942); and *The Growth of Southern Nationalism 1848-1861* (1953).

A story about fellow Round Table member Joe Eisendrath appeared in the *Suburban Trib* in mid-January. Written by Ellen Holstein, it described Joe's early interest in the Civil War, and particularly Lincoln, and his first meeting with Ralph Newman. It also discussed Joe's library and his research into both the weather during the Civil War and what Lincoln did on Sundays in the years before he became president. When asked what led him to his study of Lincoln, Joe responded, "Lincoln attracts and continues to attract. He was known in history as a great man. As I got to know him through my studies, I knew him as a man who buttons his pants the way I do. But what I admire about him most was that he was the most consummate politician who ever lived—he was honest, he was a master of patronage. An honest politician is a statesman."

THE NEW BOOKS



(Compiled by Dick Clark)

Breckinridge, Lucy. *Lucy Breckinridge of Grove Hill: The Journal of a Virginia Girl, 1862-1864*. Edited by Mary D. Robertson. Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1979. \$14.00

Brown, Daniel Patrick. *The Tragedy of Libby & Andersonville Prison Camps*. Ventua, Calif.: Golden West Historical Publications, 1980. Pbk \$2.95

Elliott, Charles Winslow. *Winfield Scott*. New York: Arno Press, 1979. \$50.00. Reprint of 1937 edition done by Macmillan.

Hassler, Warren W. *Commanders of the Army of the Potomac*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1980. \$24.50. Reprint of 1962 edition done by Louisiana State.

Johnson, Rossiter. *Campfire and Battlefield: The Classic, Illustrated History of the Civil War*. With special contributions by J.C. Morgan. New York: Fairfax Press, 1978. \$7.98. Distributed by Crown Publishers. Reprint of 1894 edition.

Kajencki, Francis C. *Star on Many a Battlefield: Brevet Brigadier General Joseph Karge in the Civil War*. Cranbury, N.J.: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1979. \$18.50

Meyers, Augustus. *Ten Years in the Ranks, U.S. Army*. New York: Arno Press, 1979. \$21.00. Reprint of 1914 edition done by Stirling Press, New York.

Shingleton, Royce Gordon. *John Taylor Wood: Sea Ghost of the Confederacy*. Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1979. \$15.00

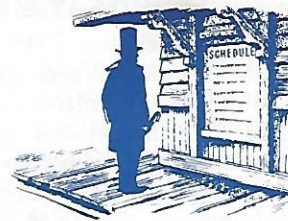
Appomattox Manor, which Ulysses S. Grant used as his headquarters to command all Union armies from June 1864 to April 1865, was recently acquired by the National Park Service. The house and 13.76 acres will be included in Petersburg National Battlefield. Its acquisition and several more acres on the historical City Point waterfront were allowed for in a \$1.2 billion park bill signed by President Carter in November 1978.

Petersburg Battlefield Superintendent Wallace B. Elms said there are immediate plans for "securing the property and for providing maintenance of the grounds and structures." Research will be undertaken to broaden the data base of Appomattox Manor in such areas as Civil War period history of the site. An archaeological study is also expected.

Elms said an interpretive plan has been drafted. After review, it will direct efforts in developing interpretive exhibits for visitors. Elms anticipates that it will be about two years before Appomattox Manor is open to visitors. He said, "One cannot overstate the historic significance of Appomattox Manor. To adequately tell the story of the military campaign and the siege of Petersburg, it is a necessary addition."

At the manor, Elms said, "We will want to interpret the command structure of the Union army, logistics relating to both armies, communications, and information about the Eppes family, whose tenure extended from 1635 to the present." The house belonged to the Eppes family and was acquired from Richard Eppes of Huntsville, Alabama.

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: Dr. John G. Barrett "From Glory to Disrepute: Sherman in the Carolinas."

April 11: Ralph G. Newman on "The Lights Go On Again At Ford's Theater."

May 9: Dr. Walter L. Brown on "Albert Pike as Confederate General."

May 14-18: Annual Battlefield Tour to the Shenandoah Valley.

June 13: Nevins-Freeman Award Dinner and installation of officers. Recipient of Award: Edwin C. Bearss.

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

James P. Blazeovich, 7820 Long, Morton Grove, Illinois 60053.

Theodore L. Eberly, 2517 S. 4th Avenue, North Riverside, Illinois 60546.

Arnold Gates, 289 New Hyde Park Road, Garden City, New York 11530.

Robert E. Jacobson, 874 Webster Lane, Des Plaines, Illinois 60016.

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The Executive Committee is seeking the assistance of all members in planning the 1981 Battlefield Tour. Please put your ideas about where we should go, and any other matters relating to the Tour, on the back of the meeting reservation card included with this newsletter.