

THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

Volume XLII, Number 7

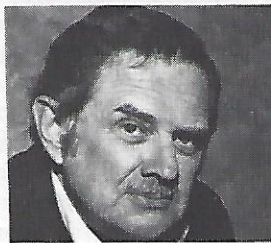
Chicago, Illinois

March, 1982

GORDON WHITNEY ON THE MYSTERY OF SPRING HILL

By all accounts, Confederate General John Bell Hood had laid a perfect trap for the Union forces under General John Schofield at Spring Hill, Tennessee, in November, 1864. And yet, on November 29, Schofield marched right passed the Confederates. Why this "perfect trap" failed has long been a subject of debate among historians, but no one has answered the question satisfactorily. Shedding some light on "The Mystery of Spring Hill" at The Round Table meeting on March 12 will be past president and fellow member Gordon Whitney.

On November 21 Hood, hoping to draw Sherman out of the south, moved his Army out from Florence, Alabama and headed for Tennessee. Sherman, ignoring Hood, started his march from Atlanta to Savannah, leaving General George Thomas in charge of all remaining troops. As Hood advanced, Thomas began to pull back towards Nashville.



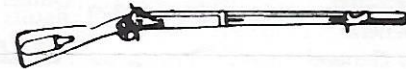
GORDON WHITNEY

Schofield, who was at Pulaski, Tennessee, was ordered to bring his forces back to Nashville on the double-quick; Hood was in position to cut him off at Spring Hill and put his whole force out of action. This would have been a serious blow to the federals. But instead of a battle taking place, Schofield marched his forces right past the Confederates.

As Gordon notes, this was a turning point of the war in the west. If Hood had knocked out Schofield and if his campaign into Tennessee and Kentucky has thus been successful, Sherman's march through Georgia would have been considered a crazy adventure; Hood himself would have been considered one of the great captains of the war. But as a result of his failure at Spring Hill, these are only "might-have-beens"

In his talk, Gordon plans to examine such questions as: Did Hood really have Schofield in a trap at Spring Hill? If so, what went wrong? How did Schofield get out unscathed? Could Hood's controversial and unusual actions at Spring Hill be blamed on the use of narcotics? Was Hood betrayed by his own lieutenants? Why did two of the finest Civil War cavalry officers, Generals James Wilson and Nathan Bedford Forrest, fail to perform their duties at Spring Hill? Why was Schofield so reluctant to move his army, which almost resulted in its capture by Hood?

Although born in Grand Rapids, Michigan, Gordon Whitney spent most of his life as a resident of Hammond, Indiana. He served that city for 23 years as a member of its fire department, rising to the rank of senior captain. While a member of the department, he authored a history of it and instituted an archives in the main fire station. After retiring from municipal service,

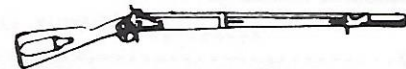


409th REGULAR MEETING

**GORDON WHITNEY
ON
THE MYSTERY OF SPRING HILL**

FRIDAY, MARCH 12, 1982

**Como Inn
546 N. Milwaukee
Cocktails at 5:30 p.m. Dinner at 6:30 p.m.**



Gordon spent several years in private business before moving in 1974 to a 108-year-old farm just outside the Ohio River community of Madison, Indiana where he was involved in raising cattle. He recently sold the farm and returned to his old profession, fire fighting. He is now Fire Director for the under-construction nuclear power plant at Marble Hill, Indiana.

Gordon was president of The Round Table in 1973-74 and served as president of the Louisville Round Table in 1976-77. He has also been president of the Hammond Historical Society and is an honorary life member of the Civil War Round Table of the United Kingdom.

Gordon's ties to the Civil War are strong as he had relatives in both the 1st Michigan cavalry and the 22nd Michigan infantry. His interest in the latter regiment and his resulting study of the western theater of the war in which it served has led to his becoming one of our foremost authorities on the campaigns of the Army of the Cumberland. The Michigan Historical Society will publish his account of the 22nd Michigan's action at the Battle of Chickamauga in the near future.

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THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE



FOUNDED DECEMBER 3, 1940

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

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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.



(continued from page 1)

Gordon has spoken to numerous other Round Tables through the years. This will be his third appearance as a speaker before The Round Table. He last addressed us in November, 1978, on Union General Jefferson C. Davis, whose biography he is currently writing.

The Confederate History Symposium will be held March 27 at the Confederate Research Center, Hill Junior College, Hillsboro, Texas. The theme this year is "Famous Texas-Confederate Military Units." For further information, write: Dr. B. D. Patterson, P.O. Box 619, Hillsboro, Texas 76645.

from the Editor's pen



In early December it was learned that a Missouri radio station was seeking a zoning variance that would permit them to erect a transmitting tower less than a mile from the Wilson's Creek National Battlefield. Responding quickly, Senior Vice President Marvin Sanderman and Battlefield Preservation Chairman Wayne Anderson sent a letter opposing the variance to the Greene County judges who were scheduled to hear the request. While we cannot say for sure what effect their letter had, we can report that the request was denied. Because their letter is so eloquent, we think it is worth bringing to the attention of all members.

Most Honorable County Judges:

On Tuesday, December 8, 1981, FM Radio Station KWTO is scheduled to petition your body for a zoning variance which would permit them to construct a 603-foot tall transmitting tower atop a ridge-line on property located approximately eight-tenths of a mile northeast of Wilson's Creek National Battlefield Military Park.

The 328 members of The Civil War Round Table earnestly urge you to deny this variance request.

Such a high tower could be easily seen from any spot in Wilson's Creek Park, and, as such, we feel would be a visual intrusion to all visitors to this important historical site.

We, as serious students of the American Civil War, have long understood the historical importance of Wilson's Creek. Gradually, the park is gaining in national prominence. Presently, the Federal government has invested \$4,500,000 in park improvements, a tremendous investment to restore and develop this battlefield area.

The citizens of Greene County and the County Judges as their elected officials in particular have a moral obligation to do their utmost to preserve the historical character and appearance of this battlefield area. You owe it to our entire country, as the \$4,500,000 the Federal government invested came from tax dollars collected throughout our land.

Again, we urge: Do not approve a zoning variance, which would visually harm this important, historic and hallowed ground. We understand Station KWTO's need for a transmitting tower. We agree that expansion and growth in our modern society should be encouraged, but not at the expense of our country's heritage. Surely there must be another suitable spot upon which KWTO could build their tower.

In a similar situation, Adams County Pennsylvania allowed a high observation tower to be erected for commercial purposes on the Gettysburg Battlefield. The venture has since been scandalized and gone bankrupt. But the tall tower, the visual eyesore, still stands, its ominous presence looming over the entire battlefield. Please do not let this happen to Wilson's Creek.

The following letter was recently sent to Marv and Wayne by James O'Toole, Superintendent of Wilson's Creek National Battlefield.

I should like to extend my appreciation for the time and effort you contributed in defeating the radio tower proposal.

As you are no doubt aware, the Greene County Court denied the petition for a variance to the zoning ordinance. As a result, the issue has been favorably resolved.

On behalf of the entire Battlefield staff, thank you for your support and assistance.

FEBRUARY MEETING

A man who devoted nearly one-third of his life to the study of the Antietam campaign, a man who knew that campaign better than anyone knew or knows any campaign of the Civil War—Ezra Ayers Carman—was David Lilley's subject when he addressed The Round Table on February 12. Dave enhanced our understanding of the work Carman, and the commission of which he was a part, did with slides showing some of the detailed maps prepared under Carman's direction.

As Dave noted, the 1890s was a period of considerable interest in battlefield preservation. Four parks were created during that decade—Chickamauga-Chattanooga, Shiloh, Gettysburg and Vicksburg. Although the Antietam park was not created until early this century, a commission, the Antietam Battlefield Board, to study the campaign and mark the scene was authorized by Congress in 1890.

By mid 1891 two members of the Board had been appointed, an ex-Confederate general named Heath and John Chandler Stearns who had fought with the 9th Vermont. They began collecting information by consulting regimental histories, examining the Official Records, and searching for unpublished correspondence. When Stearns had to resign due to ill-health, Carman was appointed to take his place.

Carman, too, had fought in the war. He served first with the 7th New Jersey and later (when he returned to action after being wounded) with the 13th New Jersey. He led that regiment through the rest of the war, part of the time as a brigadier. In 1872 he had become chief clerk of the Department of Agriculture and had been recommended for the Antietam Battlefield Board in 1890, but was passed over.

Appointed to oversee the work of the Board was Major George B. Davis. He intensified the search for information. Members of the Board accompanied survivors to the field to get their recollections and sketches were sent to veterans so they could indicate their positions during the battle. It soon became obvious that a complete set of disposition maps (an atlas) was needed. Stonewall Jackson's old map-maker, Jedediah Hotchkiss, was assigned the task in 1894. However, he was only given 60 days to complete the work, and when he still had not finished 18 months later, he was dismissed.

At one point, Dave said, the Board thought it would erect blue and red poles to mark the movements of the various units. However, this proved to be impractical. Thus, they decided on the plaques which still exist today "as testimony to the men who died and those who labored to commemorate their sacrifice."

In 1896 the chief engineer at Gettysburg (Cope) was brought to Antietam to prepare maps. But, although the maps bear his name, most of the work was done by his assistant. In 1898 Carman announced their completion, but as Dave noted, Carman's real work was just beginning at that point. He spent the next decade working alone (Heath died and Davis went off to the Spanish-American War).

Carman compiled vast amounts of material and wrote an extensive although still unpublished history of the campaign. In 1904 he published an atlas consisting of 14 2½' x 3' plates showing the different phases of the battle. The demand was great and the initial printing of 1000 sold out quickly. There was a second printing in 1908, and, importantly, there were a number of revisions. As Dave noted, not everyone is aware the second edition was revised. For example, the maps in Murfin's *The Gleam of Bayonets*, are based on the first edition since the map-maker didn't know they had been changed for the second edition.

Ayers died in 1909 and was buried at Arlington alongside many whose actions he had helped chronicle. During his time as a member of the Antietam Battlefield Board he collected an incredible, significant mass of information. And, as Dave noted,

although he was not a historian, he was able to sort out that which was important. Thus, as Dave concluded, "it is time to acknowledge our debt to Carman and the commission"

Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania National Military Park celebrated the 55th anniversary of the establishment of the park on February 14 with an open house at Chatham Manor. Highlighting the event was the unveiling of a portrait of Major James Horace Lacy who owned Chatham during the Civil War. It was painted by Emanuel Leutze, one of the most renowned American artists of the mid-nineteenth century. Leutze's most famous work is "Washington Crossing the Delaware." He painted Major Lacy's portrait in 1860. The picture remained in possession of Lacy's descendants until earlier this year when Mrs. Gerald C. Snyder of Illinois donated it to the Park. Mrs. Snyder is a great-granddaughter of Major Lacy.

Also on display at Chatham is a painting of George Washington by an unknown artist. Washington was a frequent visitor to Chatham when it was owned by his good friend, William Fitzhugh. February 22 was the 250th anniversary of Washington's birth.

The Chicago Public Library's Civil War collection is on exhibit in the G.A.R. Memorial Hall at the Chicago Public Library Cultural Center, now through June 14. The exhibit includes original manuscripts, photographs, swords, firearms, musical instruments, medical equipment and other memorabilia. A special display case features materials related to Black history, including a slave bill of sale, slave tags, and a regimental history of the first Black regiment in the Civil War.

The Cultural Center is open 9 a.m.-7 p.m., Monday-Thursday; 9 a.m.-6 p.m., Friday, and 9 a.m.-5 p.m., Saturday.

The Smithsonian Institution is sponsoring eight lectures and a study tour to examine the most critical combat actions of the Civil War. Presenting two of those lectures is Ed Bearss. One is on "Vicksburg, July 1863;" the other is "Chattanooga, Winter 1863." Ed will also lead the study tour of the Antietam battlefield later this month.

Dama Rice of Petersburg, Virginia, was recently given the Park Conservationist of the Year Award by the National Parks and Conservation Association. Dama has been fighting for the past two years to prevent a public housing project from being built next to the Petersburg National Battlefield Park. In presenting the award, the association said, "Her efforts demonstrate that preservation of our national resources can succeed if local citizens are willing to devote their time and resources to the task of educating the local officials responsible for making decisions that could impact those resources"

Civil War Round Table Associates reports that the city of Petersburg has made a definite decision that the 11 acres of public land adjacent to the Petersburg National Battlefield will not be used for high-density subsidized housing. However, there is still a possibility that the land could be used by the city for 25 single-family units.

Also at Petersburg, Glenn O. Clark, superintendent of Fort Scott National Historic Site in Kansas, has been named superintendent of the Petersburg Park, replacing Wallace B. Elms.



THE NEW BOOKS

(Compiled by Dick Clark)

Anderson, Dwight G. *Abraham Lincoln: The Quest for Immortality*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1982. \$16.95.

Busey, John W. and David G. Martin. *Regimental Strengths at Gettysburg*. Baltimore: Gateway Press, 1982. Limited to 1000 copies. \$15.00

Davis, William C., editor. *The Guns of '62*. Volume Two of The Image of War 1861-1865. Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1982. 460 p. photos. \$35.00

Erwin, John Seymour, editor. *Like Some Green Laurel: Letters of Margaret Johnson Erwin, 1821-1863*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1981. xxiii, 154 p. \$9.95

Forbes, John Murray. *Letters and Recollections of John Murray Forbes*. Edited by Sarah Forbes Hughes. New York: Arno Press, 1981. 2 vols. (Railroad material).

Gordon, John B. *Reminiscences of the Civil War*. Memorial Edition. With an introduction by General Stephen D. Lee. Memorial account by Frances Gordon Smith. Illustrated. Dayton, Ohio: Morningside Bookshop, 1981. xxvii, 474 p., photog. plates, index. Ltd 300 copies. \$25.00. Original edition 1904.

Hyman, Harold M. *To Try Men's Souls: Loyalty Tests in American History*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1982. Original of 1959. \$35.00

McWhiney, Grady and Perry D. Jamieson. *Attack or Die: Civil War Military Tactics and the Southern Heritage*. University, Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1981. \$17.95

Mitchell, Betty L. *Edmund Ruffin: A Biography*. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1981. \$22.50

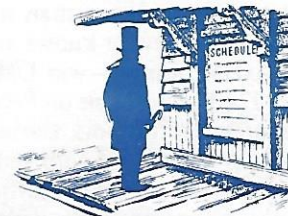
Thomas, Dean S. *Ready—Aim—Fire! Small Arms Ammunition in the Battle of Gettysburg*. Edited, with an introduction by Stephen V. Ash. Drawings by Andy Rice. Photographs by Dean S. Thomas. Arendtsville, PA: D.S. Thomas, 1981.

Williams, James M. *From that Terrible Field: Civil War Letters of James M. Williams, Twenty-first Alabama Infantry Volunteers*. Edited by John Kent Folmar. University, Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 1981.

Honorary Award Life Member John Hope Franklin received the Humanitarian Service Award from the Abraham Lincoln Centre on February 16. Franklin, the John Matthews Manly Distinguished Service Professor of History at the University of Chicago, was honored for his writings, teaching and volunteer service to civic organizations. The Abraham Lincoln Centre operates eight community centers that provide assistance to more than 300,000 Chicago residents.

The Richmond Civil War Round Table has awarded the 1981 J. Ambler Johnston Award for distinguished service to the preservation of Civil War history to Roland Galvin. Galvin is a past president of the Richmond Round Table and has served as secretary and bulletin editor for the last 10 years. He is often called upon to share his wealth of knowledge on Richmond with persons in distant places and was in charge of programs for the Fourth Annual Congress of Civil War Round Tables held in Richmond in 1978. The J. Ambler Johnston Award was established in 1980; Bill Mallory was the first recipient.

BULLETIN BOARD



FUTURE MEETINGS

Regular meetings are held at the Como Inn, 546 N. Milwaukee Avenue, the second Friday in each month except as noted.

March 12: Gordon Whitney on "The Mystery of Spring Hill?"

April 9: Pat Newman on "Julia Dent Grant"

May 5-9: Annual Battlefield Tour: Gettysburg

May 14: Zenos Hawkinson on "Mr. Lincoln's War and the Immigrant Imagination?"

June 11: Nevins-Freeman Award Dinner and installation of officers, Recipient of award: Frank E. Vandiver.

NEW MEMBERS

Michael J. Raleigh, 2442 N. Racine, Chicago, Illinois 60614 (312) 528-4909. Mr. Raleigh is affiliated with the English Department at Truman Community College.

CHANGES OF ADDRESS

Maxwell S. Austin, 50147 Helfer Blvd., Wixom, Michigan 48096 (313) 340-0670.

Kevin F. Bowen, 422 Sherman Street, Downers Grove, Illinois 60515.

Kenneth Riegler, 15217 Brassie Drive, Orland Park, Illinois 60462 (312) 349-1243.

Mrs. Eleanor H. Smith, 1600 Westbrook Avenue, Richmond, Virginia 23227.

Jerry and Joyce Warshaw, 748 Hinman Street, Evanston, Illinois 60202.

Edward S. Waterbury, 1823 Risa Place, Glendale, California 91208.

William A. Welsheimer, 2033 Trailridge Drive N., Mishawaka, Indiana 46544.

The First National Forum on Lincoln and the Union will be held in Chambersburg, Pennsylvania April 22-24, 1982. Among the speakers will be John Schildt on "The Roads to Gettysburg;" William Frassanito on "Gettysburg: A Journey in Time;" Dr. Robert Bloom on "The Battle of Antietam;" Howard C. Westwood on "The Audience for the Gettysburg Address;" and Dr. Harry Pfanz, retired Chief Historian of the National Park Service. Also featured will be an all-day tour of Gettysburg.

The registration fee, which includes all sessions, meals and tours, but not lodging, is \$140 for Civil War Round Table Associates and \$160 for non-members. Rooms at the Chambersburg Holiday Inn are \$30 single and \$36 double.

For further information, contact: Civil War Round Table Associates, P.O. Box 7388, Little Rock, Arkansas 72217 (501) 225-3996.

The National Park Service recently signed a contract with the American Association for State and Local History to develop a training program for park service interpreters. The program includes studies in "Historic Research" and Interpreting the Historic Scene?"