

THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

Volume XLV, Number 7

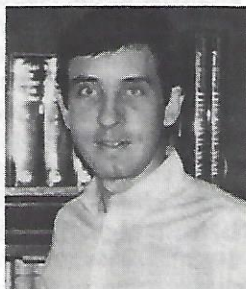
Chicago, Illinois

March, 1985

Gary W. Gallagher on Stephen Dodson Ramseur: Lee's Gallant General

His last commander, Jubal A. Early, wrote of Stephen D. Ramseur: "He was a most gallant and energetic officer whom no disaster appalled, but his courage and energy seemed to gain new strength in the midst of confusion and disorder." We will learn more about General Ramseur on March 8th when Gary Gallagher, archivist at the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library in Austin, Texas, addresses The Round Table on the career of this courageous Confederate.

Born in Lincolnton, North Carolina, Ramseur entered Davidson College, Davidson, N.C. in 1853. He decided on a military career and left Davidson in April, 1855 to accept an appointment to West Point. He stood 14th in a class of 412 when he graduated on July 1, 1860. Appointed brevet second lieutenant in the 3rd Artillery, he was stationed at Fortress Monroe, Virginia and served for a short time in Washington, D.C. He secured a promotion as second lieutenant of the 4th Artillery on February 1,



Gary W. Gallagher

1861. Ramseur was an ardent advocate of Southern rights as early as 1856 and had called for secession—and war if necessary—to prevent Northern domination of the South. With the Civil War impending, he resigned from the U.S. Army without having joined his new regiment, and offered his services to the Confederacy. Commissioned a first lieutenant of artillery, he was soon appointed a captain of a North Carolina battery. In the spring of 1862 he reported with his battery to General John B. Magruder at Yorktown, opposing the advance of McClellan's army up the Peninsula. Ramseur was detached from his battery and placed in command of the artillery of the right wing of the Confederate forces, for which service he received promotion to the rank of major. In April, 1862, he was elected colonel of the 49th North Carolina Infantry. He quickly trained his new regiment, leading it with distinction in the Seven Days' battles in front of Richmond, and though severely wounded at Malvern Hill, refused to leave the field until the fighting there had ended.

At the recommendation of General R. E. Lee, he was promoted to brigadier general on November 1, 1862 to succeed General George B. Anderson, mortally wounded at Sharpsburg. He was assigned to the command of a brigade in D. H. Hill's division of Stonewall Jackson's Second Corps of the Army of Northern Virginia. At Chancellors-



439th Regular Meeting

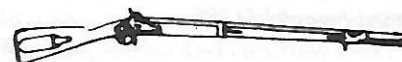
Gary W. Gallagher
on
Stephen Dodson Ramseur:
Lee's Gallant General

Friday, March 8, 1985

Chicago Press Club
410 N. Michigan

Cocktails at 5:30 p.m. Dinner at 6:30 p.m.
\$13.00 per person

Entree: Ground Round Steak or Boston Scrod



ville, he fought gallantly with the brigade and was again wounded. However, he recovered to participate in the Gettysburg and Wilderness campaigns. At Spotsylvania Court House, he received another wound as his brigade drove Hancock's men from the "Bloody Angle." He accompanied Jubal Early to the Shenandoah and was promoted major general the day after his 27th birthday—the youngest West Pointer to achieve that rank in the Confederacy. He led his division at Cold Harbor and in Early's operations. In the Shenandoah Valley, his division bore the brunt of General Sheridan's attack on September 19, 1864 at Winchester, and fell back in good order. At the battle of Cedar Creek, October 19, 1864, after participating in the initial Confederate success, he was shot through both lungs while trying to stem Sheridan's counterattack. Captured while being removed from the battlefield in an ambulance, he was taken to Sheridan's headquarters, Belle Grove, where he died the following morning, surrounded by former friends and

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THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE



Founded December 3, 1940

18 East Chestnut Street
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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 60007.



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classmates at West Point, including Custer and Merritt. Married less than a year, he had received word only the night before the battle of the birth of his daughter.

Our speaker believes that Ramseur's career provides material for a case study in the development of general officers in the Army of Northern Virginia. He was among the best of the younger Confederates who lacked pre-war experience in combat but rose rapidly through excellent performance. He compiled an enviable record as a brigadier, enjoying great success at both Chancellorsville and Spotsylvania Court House, winning praise from Lee, 'Stonewall' Jackson, Early and other prominent Southern leaders. As a divisional leader, he showed considerable promise in the maneuvering and fighting in the Shenandoah Valley in the fall of 1864. His death, coming at a point when talent and experience had equipped him to assume a larger role, was symptomatic of the collapse of the high command of Lee's army in 1864-1865.

A native of California, Gary Gallagher received his B.A. summa cum laude from Adams State College in 1972, and his master's and doctor's degrees from the University of Texas/Austin. His doctoral dissertation bore the title, "Stephen Dodson Ramseur: A Biography". He served as a research assistant to Merle Miller during Miller's writing of *Lyndon: An Oral Biography*. In 1976-77, he served as researcher and editor in the Oral History Division of the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library, and since then has been archivist in the National Archives and Records Service of that library. His published works include the editing of *Essays in Southern History Written in Honor of Barnes F. Lathrop* (1980) and "The A'Vache Tragedy" in the February 1980 issue of *Civil War Times Illustrated*. His new book, bearing the same title as his address to the Round Table, has just been published by the University of North Carolina Press. He will be autographing that book at the Abraham Lincoln Book Shop on Saturday, March 9, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Confederate Historical Institute

The seventh annual Confederate Historical Institute conference, sponsored by Civil War Round Table Associates, will be held April 4-6 in New Market, Virginia; emphasis will be on the valley campaigns. Among the speakers will be Gary Gallagher on "Ramseur in the Valley" and W. C. "Jack" Davis on "The Battle of New Market." In addition, Ed Bearss and Bob Krick will lead a tour of the Valley.

The registration fee is \$145 for Confederate Historical Institute Fellows, \$160 for Civil War Round Table Associates members, and \$180 for non-members (there is a \$10 discount for registration and payment before March 10). The fee includes all sessions, meals, and tours, but not lodging. Conference headquarters will be the Shenandoah Valley Quality Inn which has single rooms for \$34 and doubles for \$39. For further information, or to register, contact CWRT Associates, P.O. Box 7388, Little Rock, Arkansas 72217.

Fellow member Dr. Gordon Dammann has opened a Civil War medical museum next to his home in Lena, Illinois. It contains over 600 items, including uniforms, books, photographs and medical instruments. He is happy to show the museum by appointment; call him at (815) 369-4094.

February meeting

At the meeting February 8, 101 members and guests heard Herman Hattaway discuss how the North won. Citing examples from his book, *How the North Won* (co-authored with Archer Jones), Professor Hattaway offered a new analysis dealing with the outcome of the war.

From April 12, 1861, when Confederate guns fired upon Fort Sumter to President Johnson's proclamation of August 20, 1865, which formally ended hostilities, over 10,000 battles, engagements, and other military actions took place. However, even the more significant and well-known campaigns were not completely decisive. Both sides lacked the capability to annihilate the other. During the war, the North possessed a quantitative superiority over the South in such areas as manpower, industrial and farm production, railroad mileage, and shipping. In order to win, the North had to develop a system to use all of its resources against the South. This meant developing a cohesive war strategy.

Early in his talk, Professor Hattaway offered six factors that explained how the North won:

- Lincoln developed into a good conventional strategist during the war. He knew that the objective was to defeat the Confederate armies and not merely to occupy territory.

- Grant, as commanding general of the Union Army, was an excellent strategist. He did everything with a specific reason, and he had capable subordinates, such as Sherman, to execute his strategy.

- The North developed a better managerial system than the Confederacy. An example of this is the War Board organized by Stanton, Lincoln's Secretary of War.

- In the spring of 1864, the Union armies advanced simultaneously on several fronts. This decreased the Confederacy's advantage of interior lines.

- The use of army-size raids against the Confederacy as opposed to occupying territory. During the war, nearly one-third of the Union army was used for guard and security functions. This reduced the North's advantage in manpower. Professor Hattaway cited several examples of raids: Sherman marching through Georgia and the Carolinas; Sheridan in the Valley; and Wilson's movement through Alabama.

- The war was not fought only in Virginia and Richmond, the Confederate capital, was not the main objective. Destroying the South's capacity to wage war was the real objective.

General Henry W. Halleck, Lincoln's chief of staff, is often overlooked by historians, but he made several important contributions to the North's victory. He defined his role in a letter to Sherman as the chief military advisory to Lincoln and Stanton. His function was not to command. If he disagreed with the President on a course of military action, he would say so, but he would not criticize the President's policies in public.

As chief of staff, Halleck coordinated the various bureaus in Washington, and was responsible for efficient staff coordination. In regard to strategy, he emphasized the Western Theatre and convinced Lincoln of the strategic importance of controlling the Mississippi River. His instructions to department and army commanders were written in a clear and concise manner.

Halleck was influential in assigning regular army officers to key command positions, and he ensured that McClernand was subordinate to Grant during the Vicks-

burg campaign. Also, he ordered the preservation of official records, both Union and Confederate, for future generations of officers to study.

As a military strategist, Lincoln's ideas were realistic and workable. The North had to overcome the Confederacy's advantage of interior lines. Lincoln thus advocated the concept of simultaneous advance during the winter of 1862. He quickly agreed to Grant's strategy for the campaign of 1864 when several Union armies did advance into various portions of the Confederacy. The basis for Lincoln's military strategy was General Winfield Scott's Anaconda Plan, which included the blockade of Southern ports and controlling the Mississippi River.

Lincoln also was an excellent political strategist. He sought reconciliation with the South. During the war, he offered liberal terms to Southern states if they would reenter the Union. His main political objective was the preservation of the Union, and he had to confront problems from various political factions in the North. He had to harmonize many views and opinions towards accomplishing his objective.

In Professor Hattaway's final analysis, the North won the Civil War because it developed a centralized organization to wage war. By 1865, the Union army had a general staff which could plan and execute national war plans.

An exhibit, Ulysses S. Grant: Man of War, Man of Peace, will be on display in the Grand Army of the Republic Memorial Hall at the Chicago Public Library Cultural Center from March 2-May 4. The exhibit, which includes photos, prints, documents and artifacts, covers Grant's early years through his death. It is part of a traveling show organized by the University Museum, Southern Illinois University at Carbondale, to mark the 100th anniversary of Grant's death. The hours of the exhibit are 9 a.m.-7 p.m. Monday-Thursday, 9 a.m.-6 p.m. Friday, and 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Saturday.

A traveling exhibit, "The Lincoln Image—Abraham Lincoln and the Popular Print," will be on display at the Newberry Library, 60 W. Walton, from March 20 through May 31. The viewing hours for the free exhibit are 9 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Monday, Friday and Saturday and 9 a.m.-8 p.m. Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. Harold Holzer, Gabor Borritt and Mark Neely, authors of the book by the same name that accompanies the exhibit, will speak at the Library on March 19 at 6 p.m. The cost is \$5 for non-members of the Library. In addition, they will be at the Book Shop from 5:30-7:30 p.m. March 18 autographing their book.

The Round Table Executive Committee, at its meeting February 8, decided to hold a regular Nevins-Freeman Award Dinner on Friday, September 20, and a separate all-day symposium on General U. S. Grant sometime in March, 1986. As most members will remember, the Nevins-Freeman Award and the all-day symposium have been combined the last two years.

It was felt that holding the symposium next March would provide the needed time for planning and publicity, and that there would be fewer conflicts with other events in March. Dr. John Y. Simon, Executive Director of the U. S. Grant Association, is this year's Award recipient. It is hoped that he will also come back to participate in the symposium in 1986.

THE NEW BOOKS

(compiled by Dick Clark)



Chesnut, Mary Boykin. *The Private Mary Chesnut: The Civil War Diaries*. Ed. by C. Vann Woodward and Elisabeth Muhlenfeld. New York: Oxford University Press, 1984. 292 p. pbk \$8.95.

Daddysman, James W. *The Matamoros Trade: Confederate Commerce, Diplomacy and Intrigue*. Cranbury, New Jersey: University of Delaware Press, 1984. 215 p. \$27.50.

Dickison, Mary Elizabeth. *Dickison and His Men: Reminiscences of the War in Florida*. Jacksonville, Florida: San Marco Bookstore, 1984. \$17.00. Reissue of 1962 printing.

Flucker, Anne and Winifred. *Confederate Gold*. With an introduction by Richard Harwell. Macon, Georgia: Tulous Books, 1984. \$10.95. Stories based on experiences of a private in Lee's Army of Northern Virginia.

Harrison, Walter. *Pickett's Men: A Fragment of War History*. With new introduction by Gary W. Gallagher. Gaithersburg, MD: Butternut Press, 1984. 214 p. \$24.00.

Hawks, Esther Hill. *A Woman Doctor's Civil War: Esther Hill Hawks' Diary*. Edited with a foreword and afterword by Gerlad Schwartz. Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1984. \$17.95.

Leckie, William H. and Shirley A. *Unlikely Warriors: General Benjamin H. Grierson and his Family*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1984. 368 p. \$19.95.

Monaghan, Jay. *Civil War on the Western Border, 1854-1865*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1984. pbk \$9.95. Original of 1955.

Morris, George and Susan Foutz. *Lynchburg in the Civil War*. Lynchburg, VA: H. E. Howard, Inc., 1984. 1000 numbered & signed. \$16.50. First in a 30-volume series to deal with Virginia's battles, individual leaders and cities.

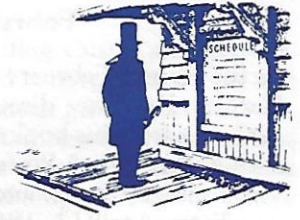
Otis, George H. *The Second Wisconsin Infantry*. With letters and recollections by other members of the regiment. Edited and with an introduction by Alan D. Gaff. Dayton, Ohio: Press of Morningside Bookshop, 1984. 273 p. \$25.00.

Wellman, Manly Wade. *Giant in Gray. A Biography of Wade Hampton of South Carolina*. Dayton, Ohio: Morningside Bookshop, 387 p. \$17.50. Original of 1949.

There is nothing unusual about shopping by catalog, but making a donation by catalog? Gettysburg National Military Park has published a donation catalog to make it easier to help the National Park Service preserve and protect the battlefield. It features a compilation of goods and services the park needs but is unable to fund. Contribution ideas range from \$5 to purchase an audiotope to \$500,000 to underwrite new electronic switching equipment, lighting and narration for the Cyclorama. Contributions are tax deductible; contributors of \$25 or more will receive a certificate suitable for framing.

To receive a copy of the catalog, write to Superintendent, Gettysburg National Military Park, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania 17325. A copy will be available at the March meeting for your perusal.

BULLETIN BOARD



Future meetings

Regular meetings are held at the Chicago Press Club, 410 N. Michigan, the second Friday in each month, except as noted.

March 8: Gary Gallagher on "Stephen Dodson Ramseur: Lee's Gallant General."

April 12: William Sullivan on "The War in the Trans-Mississippi."

May 1-5: Annual Battlefield Tour to Petersburg and Appomattox.

May 10: Jeffry D. Wert on "The 1864 Shenandoah Valley Campaign."

June 14: Richard B. Harwell, subject to be announced.

September 20: Nevins-Freeman Award Dinner: Recipient of Award, Dr. John Y. Simon. **Note:** This is the third Friday of the month.

New members

Robert A. Balzekas, 175 E. Deleware, #8702, Chicago, Illinois 60611 (312) 847-1515.

Larry Selander, 1434 Astor, Chicago, Illinois 60610 (312) 664-6967.

We have learned that White Haven, the family home of the Dents (Grant's in-laws) near St. Louis is up for sale. The house was originally constructed in 1808 by William Lindsay Long and was later used by the Lucas-Hunt family and Frederick Dent, Grant's father-in-law. It is currently held in trust as part of the estate of Delbert Wenzlick, a realtor who occupied it from 1940 to 1979. Although it is listed in the National Register of Historic Places, it is now vacant and deteriorating rapidly (the Wenzlick family cannot afford to maintain the house). The property is valued at \$900,000. The St. Louis County Historic Buildings Commission is willing to help save it, but cannot afford to buy it outright. If the house cannot be sold it will be razed.

The Illinois State Historical Society is seeking proposals for papers, or sessions, to be delivered at the Sixth Annual Symposium on Illinois History, November 29 and 30, 1985. Papers, or sessions, will be considered on any aspect of the history, literature, art and culture, politics, geography, archeology, anthropology, and related fields of Illinois and/or the Ohio and Mississippi Valleys. The Symposium will be held in Springfield.

Individuals who wish to submit proposals should send a 300-600 word summary, along with resumes of intended participants, to: Roger D. Bridges, Head of Library Services, Illinois State Historical Library, Old State Capitol, Springfield, Illinois 62706. Proposals must be received by April 2, 1985. Individuals will be notified of the Committee's decision by June 3, 1985.

Stephen Starr, author of a number of Civil War Books and articles, including the three volume *Union Cavalry in the Civil War*, died January 19. He was 75.