



THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

Volume XLVII, Number 9

Chicago, Illinois

May, 1987

Betty J. Otto on Maryland Remembers The Civil War

by C. Robert Douglas

In a letter to President Jefferson Davis dated September 3, 1862, General Robert E. Lee wrote: "The present seems to be the most propitious time since the commencement of the war for the Confederate Army to enter Maryland. The two grand armies of the United States that have been operating in Virginia, though now united, are much weakened and demoralized. Their new levies, of which I understand 60,000 men have already been posted in Washington, are not yet organized, and will take some time to prepare for the field. If it is ever desired to give material aid to Maryland and afford her an opportunity of throwing off the oppression to which she is now subject, this would seem the most favorable...."

The Confederate invasion of Maryland that resulted in the battles of South Mountain and Antietam represented the most significant event of the war for the people of that important state. However, other events that preceded the September, 1862 campaign were critical to the Union and the Confederacy. On May 8, 1987, Betty J. Otto, who serves as supervisor of "Volunteers in the Park" at the Antietam National Battlefield, Sharpsburg, Maryland, will address The Round Table on the events of the 1860s that impacted on the lives of Marylanders during that crucial era.



Betty J. Otto

The crisis created by secession and its evolution into civil war had great significance for the state of Maryland and its citizens. Strong social, economic and family ties with Virginia and the other states that made up the Confederacy made the problem of loyalty one of the state's most perplexing problems during this era. Internal dissension and division made the state's early position uncertain, despite the official support of the Federal government. Those who sympathized with the South felt that the state was being held in the Union by force. Northerners who remembered the rioting in Baltimore on April 19, 1861 against the 6th Massachusetts regiment and who noted other displays of pro-Southern sentiment regarded Maryland with suspicion. The crucial test of her loyalty, however, came in the autumn of 1862 when Southern troops invaded and occupied much of the western region of the state.

To the South, an invasion of Maryland posed distinct advantages. An army threatening Washington, Baltimore or Philadelphia would ease the pressure on Richmond and, in turn, would permit farmers in Virginia to gather their crops



461st Regular Meeting

Betty J. Otto
on
Maryland Remembers
the Civil War

Friday, May 8, 1987

Quality Inn

Halsted and Madison

Cocktails at 5:30 p.m. Dinner at 6:30 p.m.

\$13.00 per person

Entree: Beef Bourguignon, Fish, or Fruit Plate



Executive Committee meeting

President Pat Sumner has announced there will be an Executive Committee meeting on May 8 at 5 p.m. at the Quality Inn. The main item on the agenda is selection of the 1988 Battlefield Tour site. All current officers, committee chairmen and past presidents are urged to attend.

without interference. Another important consideration was the liberation of Maryland from Union control. Since many Southerners believed that Federal forces were denying the people of Maryland the right to freely choose their destiny, it therefore followed that the presence of a Confederate army in the state would allow Marylanders the opportunity to declare for the Confederacy.

General Lee's proposal to move into Maryland was not difficult to explain, as it had become a near necessity from both military and political considerations. The Army of Northern Virginia was so ill equipped and so inferior in total numbers to the still growing Federal forces that Lee literally could not stand still. Lee shared the opinion, in which most Southern officers and editors concurred, that his army should fight on enemy soil and there make the war

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THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE



Founded December 3, 1940

18 East Chestnut Street
Chicago, Illinois 60611

Phone: (312) 944-3085

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Picnic	Joan Carlson

The only requirement for membership in The Round Table is a genuine interest in the Civil War and its era. For information, address Dan Weinberg, 18 E. Chestnut St., Chicago, IL 60611.



A two-day Lincoln Seminar in Springfield and New Salem will be held July 10-12, 1987. Lincoln's life will be examined in depth, and there will be a lecture by Wayne Temple. At New Salem, the seminar will view the play, "Your Obedient Servant, A. Lincoln." The seminar is sponsored by North Central College's Department of Continuing Education and will be led by Lee C. Moorehead. For information, contact North Central College, Department of Continuing Education, Naperville, Illinois 60540.

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support itself. Lee wrote to Davis that the army lacked shoes, clothes, transport animals and much of the material of war. The political motives were equally important to the Confederacy. A decisive victory beyond the Potomac offered not only the best hope of gaining the intervention of France and Great Britain, but also offered the greatest chance of raising Northern war weariness to the point that peace negotiations might be instituted. In its issue of July 21, 1862, the *Richmond Examiner* had declared, "There is but one method of putting an end to the war, and that is by destroying the Federal credit"; in other words, financial pressure would force the Union to move toward a quick and peaceful resolution of the conflict.

With the retreat of the Confederate forces after the bloody battle of Antietam, the belief that the people of Maryland, if given an opportunity, would rise up in support of the Confederacy was shattered. Maryland's response to Lee's proclamation offering aid in restoring her "independence and sovereignty" was negative. Coolness and indifference were far more pronounced than enthusiasm. Many southern sympathizers, lacking confidence in the ability of Southern forces to maintain their control over the state, were cautious in their reception of Lee's army. Although pro-Southern manifestations continued to persist, the failure of the Confederacy's first major invasion of the North affirmed Maryland's adherence to the Union and dispelled the North's suspicions concerning the state's loyalty.

A native of Hagerstown, Maryland, Betty graduated from its high school in 1947. She is a member of the Harpers Ferry Round Table and has had extensive service with U.S. governmental agencies. She has been employed with the Medical Laboratories Research Facility at the Edgewood (MD) Arsenal; one year with Veterans Administration Hospital in Martinsburg, West Virginia; and 23 years with the National Park Service. Since 1972, she has served as Coordinator of 'Volunteers in the Park', developing living interpretive programs at the Antietam Battlefield Park. The 'Volunteers' now number 310, and serve in capacities such as: natural and cultural resource management projects; Civil War soldier encampment programs; weapons demonstrations and military drills; and women's programs on the Sanitary Commission during the Civil War.

We report with sadness the death, on March 24, of Honorary Life Member Henry W. Kennedy. Although he seldom attended meetings in recent years, Henry, who was 88, was a long-time member. Our sincere condolences are extended to his family.

We also must report the death, on March 30, of James V. Murfin, author of *The Gleam of Bayonets*, a book about the battle of Antietam that was selected as the best nonfiction Civil War book of 1965. Jim, who worked for the National Park Service before his retirement, was a founding member of the Hagerstown Round Table. Our condolences are extended to his family.

A 125th Anniversary Seminar on the Seven Days Battles, sponsored by the Friends of Virginia Civil War Parks, will be held in Richmond on May 2. The \$30 fee includes all speakers and the banquet at which William Henderson will speak on "Mahone's Brigade in the Seven Days." For further information, call Dennis Madison at (804) 271-0858.

April meeting

by Wayne Anderson

At the 460th regular meeting of The Civil War Round Table, Mike Chesson spoke on The Richmond Bread Riot.

On April 2, 1863, a group of women met near a Baptist church in Richmond; the purpose was to organize a protest against high food prices and the scarcity of food in the Confederate capital. The protestors, after hearing a rousing speech, poured towards Capitol Square. They were joined by others, men among them, until they numbered several hundred.

What started as a protest against high food prices now became an angry mob as the crowd surged into the city's shopping district. Brandishing knives and hatchets, they smashed windows and broke into stores. A company of soldiers arrived and blocked the progress of the mob. With both sides glaring at each other, it appeared the situation could become violent. However, by ones and twos, and then by dozens, the crowd left the shopping district and melted into the streets. The Richmond Bread Riot was over.

Civil War historians have usually overlooked the Bread Riot and considered it unimportant. One reason they consider the event not worthy of study is because it is not related to the campaigns of the War. Also, it allegedly involved only a handful of hysterical women. When mentioned at all, it is often misdated and military accounts usually omit any reference to it. However, the Richmond Bread Riot was a carefully planned protest against the Confederate government and was paralleled by similar events taking place elsewhere within the Confederacy.

Before the War, Richmond had a population of 38,000. The War caused the city to undergo vast changes. One was that the population increased several times. The arrival of soldiers, bureaucrats and laborers swelled the city's population to over 120,000. Also, thousands of poor were attracted to Richmond. Without jobs or any other means of support, they drifted aimlessly. The government was involved in waging a war and it did not have any plans to deal with this population increase or with the unemployed. Richmond was a powder keg waiting for a spark to ignite it.

By the spring of 1863, the Union blockade was becoming more effective and closing off supplies to the Confederacy from Europe. Inside the Confederacy, high inflation and a poor transportation system caused the prices of essential goods to soar. The shortages were felt primarily in the cities. In addition, the Confederate government was impressing both food and other goods for the military. All of these factors were contributing to disenchantment inside the Confederacy.

The situation in Richmond became critical in late March. Earlier that month there had been a near panic in the city when the government ordered the seizure of all flour in the mills and warehouses. The problem had not been resolved by the end of the month as the War Department ignored a Richmond court order to stop the impressment. On March 19 and 20, the city had a nine-inch snowfall, the heaviest of the winter. The snow melted quickly, but the roads became a sea of mud. The flow of food and other goods into the city came to a virtual standstill and what food could be found was being sold at "famine" prices.

The combination of all these events led to the Bread Riot. The city's newspapers blamed the riot on the poor, the foreign-born and the Jews. This was completely untrue.

The women who participated in the Riot were middle-class Richmonders and many had fathers and sons in the army.

The Richmond Bread Riot was not the only protest against inflation and lack of food inside the Confederacy. Other cities witnessed violent outbursts too. However, The Richmond Bread Riot is significant for several reasons. One is that it started as an organized protest against the government's policy causing inflation and food shortages. Second, the majority of the participants were from the city's middle-class. They felt their purchasing power decrease as inflation soared and they were unable to buy food and other goods. Third, the Bread Riot temporarily threatened the Confederate capital. Troop movements to the Army of Northern Virginia were curtailed due to the violence and looting.

Founding member Ralph G. Newman has been named the winner of the 1987 Barondess/Lincoln Award of the Civil War Round Table of New York. The award, given annually since 1962 in memory of the late Dr. Benjamin Barondess of New York, a Lincoln scholar and charter member of the New York Round Table, is for "contribution to the greater appreciation of the life and works of Abraham Lincoln."

Ralph, as most know, is the author of many books and articles on Lincoln and is an international authority on the subject. He was the founder of the Abraham Lincoln Book Shop, and is a consultant in the assembling and evaluating of Lincoln collections to major public institutions, such as the Library of Congress and the Smithsonian, as well as to hundreds of private institutions, companies and individuals.

A lecture, lunch and Civil War battlefield tour in commemoration of the 1862 Battle of McDowell will be held May 16 in McDowell, Virginia, about an hour's drive west of Staunton. The Battle of McDowell, which was the first Confederate victory of Stonewall Jackson's Valley Campaign, was fought on May 8, 1862. The lecture will be by Gary Gallagher and the tour will be led by Doug Gutshall and G.W. O'Baugh. The registration fee, which includes lunch, lecture, maps and the tour, is \$14. For more information, write McDowell Tour, Stonewall Jackson House, 8 East Washington St., Lexington, Virginia 24450.

Fellow member Marshall Krolick will address the Des Moines Civil War Round Table on May 19. His topic will be "Lee and Longstreet at Gettysburg." On June 8, Merl Sumner will speak to the Indianapolis Round Table on "Grant's Staff: A Plus or a Minus?" On April 23, fellow member Dr. Gordon Dammann of Lena, Illinois addressed the Cincinnati Round Table on "Medicine in the Civil War."

Help wanted. High pay. Short hours. Pleasant working conditions. Well, at least the working conditions are pleasant. Seriously, we are looking for people who are interested in working on the newsletter next year. The present staff has been at it for a number of years and we would like to break in some new recruits. Extensive knowledge of the Civil War is not required; just some writing ability and plenty of interest. If you would like to know more, see Dave Richert or Bob Douglas at the next meeting, or call Dave at 761-6937 (home) or 558-6900, ext. 219 (work).

The New Books compiled by Dick Clark



Freeman, Douglas Southall. *Lee's Lieutenants*. 3 vols. pbk \$17.95 each; \$55.00 set boxed.

Haines, Alanson A. *History of the 15th New Jersey Volunteer Infantry*. Gaithersburg, MD: Butternut Press, 1987. 388 p. \$30.00. Original of 1883.

Hassler, Warren W., Jr. *Crisis at the Crossroads: The First Day at Gettysburg*. Gaithersburg, MD: Butternut Press, 1986. \$15.00. Original of 1970.

Koch, Freda Postle. *Colonel Coggeshall: The Man who Saved Lincoln*. Columbus, OH: Poko Press, 1986. 261 p. pbk \$11.95.

Liddell, St. John Richardson. *Liddell's Record*. Edited by N.T. Hughes. Dayton: Morningside Bookshop, 1985. 218 p. \$20.00.

Merrill, James M. *Du Pont: The Making of an Admiral. A Biography of Samuel Francis Du Pont*. New York: Dodd, Mead, 1987. 384 p. \$21.95.

Military Service Records: A Select Catalog of National Archives Microfilm Publications. Washington, DC: National Archives, 1986. pbk 330 p. \$5.00.

Mohr, Clarence L. *On the Threshold of Freedom: Masters and Slaves in Civil War Georgia*. Athens & London: The University of Georgia Press, 1986. 397 p. \$35.00.

Munden, Kenneth W. and Henry Putney Beers. *The Union: A Guide to Federal Archives Relating to the Civil War*. New introduction by Frank G. Burke. Washington, DC: The National Archives, 1986. 721 p. \$25.00.

Murdock, Eugene Converse. *The Civil War in the North: A Selective Annotated Bibliography*. New York: Garland Publ. Co., 1987. Indexes. \$58.00. In series: Wars of the United States, vol. 9.

Murphy, John M. *Confederate Carbines & Musketoons*. Volume I. La Jolla, CA: The author, 1986. 248 p., illus. \$45.00.

Myers, Frank M. *The Comanches: A History of White's Battalion, Virginia Cavalry, Laurel Brigade, Hampton's Division, Army of Northern Virginia, C.S.A.* New introduction and notes by Lee A. Wallace, Jr. New illustrations added. Gaithersburg, MD: Butternut Press, 1987. \$35.00. Original of 1871.

Orendorff, Henry. *We Are Sherman's Men: The Civil War Letters of Henry Orendorff*. Edited by William M. Anderson. Macomb, IL: Western Illinois University. pbk \$3.95.

Perman, Michael. *Emancipation and Reconstruction, 1862-1879*. Arlington Heights, IL: Harlan Davidson, 1987. pbk \$8.95.

Porter, Horace. *Campaigning with Grant*. New introduction by William S. McFeely. New York: Da Capo Press, 1986. pbk \$12.95. Original of 1897.

Spencer, James, compiler. *Civil War Generals: Categorical Listings and a Biographical Directory*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1986. \$39.95.

Thompson, Jerry D. *Mexican Texans in the Union Army*. El Paso: Western Press, The University of Texas Press at El Paso, 1986. 82 p. pbk \$4.00.

BULLETIN BOARD



Future meetings

Regular meetings are held at the Quality Inn, Halsted and Madison, the second Friday in each month, except as noted.
May 8: Betty Otto on "Maryland Remembers the Civil War."

June 5: Mark Boatner on "How the Civil War Dictionary Came Into Being." **Note:** This is the first Friday of the month.

July 12: Annual picnic.

New members

Aylmer M. Gifford, 3627 N. Francisco Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60618 (312) 588-6788.

Morton and Gayle Herman, 180 East Pearson, Chicago, Illinois 60611 (312) 266-8239.

Arthur E. Maeder, Sr., 7936 Sunset Drive, Elmwood Park, Illinois 60635 (312) 453-9218.

William P. Malloy, 5923 N. Kostner, Chicago, Illinois 60646 (312) 283-1559.

Frank J. Novak, 3122 W. Eddy St., Chicago, Illinois 60618 (312) 478-9073.

John Petty, 319 Elm, Glen Ellyn, Illinois 60137 (312) 858-2406.

Mildred E. Shane, 8635 S. Central, Burbank, Illinois 60459 (312) 425-3135.

Changes of address

Barbara Hughett, 7040 N. Sheridan Rd., Apt. 406, Chicago, Illinois 60626.

Tom Peters, 500 S. Mt. Prospect Rd., Des Plaines, Illinois 60016.

Nominating Committee report

Paul Kliger, chairman of the Nominating Committee, has announced the following proposed slate of officers for the 1987-88 year:

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Vice President Richard W. McAdoo
Vice President David R. Richert
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Assistant Secretary Hal Ardell
Assistant Treasurer Wayne Anderson
Trustee Robert Balzekas
Trustee Joan Carlson
Trustee Ben Carlton
Trustee Leslie W. MacDonald
Trustee (to fill the unexpired term of David Richert) Joseph L. Wischart

The election will be held during the May meeting, at which time additional nominations for any of the above offices may be made from the floor. Three current trustees, W. Frank Meacham, Jr., Marlan H. Polhemus, and Robert J. Schell, will remain in office as they complete their two year terms.