

THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

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Michael A. Hughes on "The Chattanooga Campaign of the Fall of 1863"

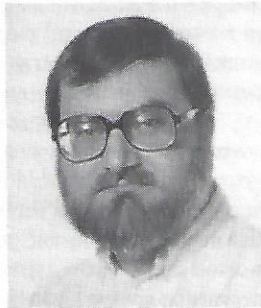
by Barbara Hughett

The warfare around Chattanooga, Tennessee did not involve the Battle of Chickamauga alone, but was a prolonged series of skirmishes and serious conflicts that extended from early September of 1863 to the latter part of November. The prize for the contenders was the small town of Chattanooga, a railroad and water travel center and the key to the supply lines that fed the Southern troops to the north of it. Following their defeat at the Battle of Missionary Ridge on November 25, the Southern armies began their retreat into Georgia. Confederate General D. H. Hill later made the observation that "Chattanooga sealed the fate of the Confederacy."

"The Chattanooga Campaign of the Fall of 1863" will be the topic of Michael A. Hughes when he addresses The Civil War Round Table on May 10. It is his contention that this is one of the most misunderstood campaigns of the Civil War. As a result of considerable research and study, he has come to the opinion that many previous interpretations of the campaign may need to be completely reversed. For example, he believes that Grant's "brilliantly planned" battle on Lookout Mountain may have come as a complete surprise to him, while the "unordered charge" up Missionary Ridge was the consequence of hundreds of issued orders.

Joseph Wheeler's disastrous raid on Federal supply lines during the siege of Chattanooga, Hughes emphasizes, was more damaging to General Braxton Bragg's Southern soldiers than to the northern army under the command of General William S. Rosecrans. Chattanooga was an ironic campaign. Seldom had a northern campaign penetrated so far into the south; yet, not since Gettysburg had the local population been so intent on a Union victory. And while the besieged Union forces at Chattanooga appeared to be in constant danger of destruction, it was Bragg's army which was really starving to death.

The story of the Chattanooga campaign provides a fascinating look at how dramatically morale could shift among enlisted men, at the tragedy of a Confederate commander unequal to his soldiers, and at the reasons why generals rise and fall. The outcome demonstrated that while Grant blundered at times, his flexibility and aggressiveness



Michael A. Hughes



501st Regular Meeting

Michael A. Hughes
on

"The Chattanooga Campaign
of the Fall of 1863"

Friday, May 10, 1991

Holiday Inn Mart Plaza
350 North Orleans Street
Buttons—15th floor

Cocktails at 5:30 p.m. Dinner at 6:30 p.m.
\$17.50 per person
Entree: Breast of Chicken Marsala,
Fish, or Fruit Plate



Parking

If you are driving and coming from the south, turn left into the Mart Plaza lot just after crossing the river on Orleans. From the north, turn right from Orleans on Hubbard, left on Kingsbury, right on Kinzie, and left into the Mart Plaza lot. Parking is free. Have your ticket validated at The Round Table registration table.

were, in the end, decisive. As a result of this victory, Union forces positioned themselves to destroy the Confederacy's last east-west rail connections.

A resident of Ada, Oklahoma, Michael A. Hughes is a United Methodist minister and an instructor in humanities at Oklahoma East Central University. Additionally, he develops programs and teaching resources for public schools. He received a B.A. in humanities from Hendrix College, a M. Div. from Vanderbilt University, and a Ph.D. in history from the University of Arkansas. He was an

(continued on page 2)

THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE



Founded December 3, 1940
357 West Chicago Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60610
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 Dan Weinberg, 357 W. Chicago Ave., Chicago, IL 60610.



(continued from page 1)

instructor in history at the University of Arkansas.

Michael Hughes has written articles on Civil War history for a number of publications, including *Blue & Gray*, *Civil War News*, and the *Arkansas Historical Quarterly*, and has spoken to various historical groups throughout the country. He is currently working on a book on the Chattanooga campaign, as well as an illustrated book on the history of the everyday life of American children.

Raymond N. Dooley, president of Lincoln College for nearly twenty-five years and longtime Round Table member, died on February 13. We extend our sincere condolences to the Dooley family.

Battlefield Preservation Report

by Mary Munsell Abroe

In discussions of Civil War battlefield preservation, the subject of funding always comes up—and it is usually sooner rather than later. Moreover, such discussions often center on the scarcity of available monies—federal monies, that is—for virtually every aspect of the government's many preservation activities. Thus, the recent revelation that the budget for FY 1992 calls for appropriation of \$15 million to implement Secretary of the Interior Manuel Lujan's American Battlefield Protection Plan is encouraging, if not cause for celebration. (We could celebrate if it was October, not May, and Congress had passed the proposed budget.) In addition, the budget calls for \$6 million from the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund to go to the states in the form of grants for battlefield preservation.

Perhaps the most promising element of Secretary Lujan's activism is his involvement in the preparation of a nationwide fund-raising drive aimed at attracting millions of dollars to buy endangered Civil War sites and to otherwise effect battlefield preservation objectives. (Said objectives, it is envisioned, will emerge from the work of the Civil War Sites Advisory Commission, which is currently in process of formation.)

This effort is being modeled upon the recent, highly successful federal fundraiser that drew \$350 million in private monies for restoration of the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island. The proposed vehicle is a private foundation that would solicit funds from relatively untapped sources in the private sector—corporations and foundations—as well as from the general populace. It would operate under the auspices of the Interior Department, but no federal funds would be involved.

Unlike the Statue of Liberty drive, the monies raised would be used to preserve non-federal sites. Thus, for example, battlefield land where there is no federal presence could be protected through outright purchase or the acquisition of easements, with ownership possibly being assumed by private organizations or state/local governments; privately owned plots within the boundaries of existing national battlefield reservations might also fall within the scope of the proposed foundation's activity. In the April issue of *Civil War News*, Dr. Marilyn Nickles of Lujan's staff indicated that the Secretary continues to work toward the foundation's creation, although no formal announcement of the project has yet been made.

Several factors augur well for the project's success: the leadership role assumed by Secretary Lujan; current, heightened public interest in the Civil War; and the recent, precedent-setting activism in battlefield preservation of the Gilder Foundation of New York and the Richard King Mellon Foundation of Pittsburgh. The productive partnership forged by the Gilder Foundation and the Association for the Preservation of Civil War Sites and the Mellon Foundation's gift to the nation of 1611 acres of endangered land at four battlefields in July 1990 clearly indicate the following: when rational arguments for battlefield preservation are advanced and a compelling need is established, private philanthropy can be a powerful ally in the campaign to protect our tangible Civil War legacy. Ultimately, however, the coexistence of a number of favorable circumstances is that and no more. Thus, we anticipate the announcement of the "nuts and bolts" of Secretary Lujan's plan in the very near future; in battlefield preservation as in most other areas of endeavor, timing is everything.

April Meeting

by Barbara Hughett

On Friday, April 12, 145 members and guests gathered for the 500th regular meeting of The Civil War Round Table. To mark this special occasion, President David R. Richert offered a champagne toast to The Civil War Round Table. Founder Ralph G. Newman, who was out of town and unable to attend, appeared via videotape to give a historical review, in which he recalled some of the events and personalities in Round Table history. "I'm sorry I can't be with you tonight," Newman said at the close of his remarks, "but at least I'm with you in spirit—and I guess in what Lincoln termed 'my shadow,' which is the way he referred to photographs." The main address of the evening was given by Civil War scholar and author A. Wilson Greene, currently the executive director of The Association for the Preservation of Civil War Sites. His topic was "From Chancellorsville to Cemetery Hill: The Eleventh Corps on the First Day of Gettysburg."

Greene began his talk by quoting Eleventh Corps Captain Frederick Otto von Fritsch, recalling the end of the Battle of Chancellorsville: "On the sixth day of May orders came for the Eleventh Corps to march to United States Ford to recross the Rappahannock River on pontoon bridges... and to march back to the old camps. I recrossed with a heavy heart, and... I felt tears rolling down my cheeks. I was ashamed of this battle, and deplored the sad experience of the Eleventh Corps."

The Eleventh Corps had become—unfairly in Greene's estimation—the scapegoat for the Union debacle at Chancellorsville, and its men wanted to do something positive to alter their public image and to prove that they were brave, competent, and honorable. "Its maligned men," Greene noted, "harbored disappointment, anger, and hostility, and longed for an opportunity to demonstrate that they did not deserve their dishonorable post-Chancellorsville reputation." As they followed Robert E. Lee's northward-bound army into Pennsylvania, they hoped they would get that chance.

Unfortunately, events on the first day of the Battle of Gettysburg did nothing to enhance the reputation of the Eleventh Corps. Some analysts have argued that the decision of Corps Commander General Oliver Otis Howard to advance General Alexander Schimmelfennig and General Francis Channing Barlow north of town "sealed the fate of the Eleventh Corps before a Confederate shot had been fired against them." Greene contended that "if one accepts the premise that the Cemetery Hill-Culp's Hill-Cemetery Ridge position offered the best terrain for the tactical defensive, the question becomes how best Howard could secure that terrain until the bulk of the Army of the Potomac could help him defend it. Howard acted as he did for reasons that remain sound despite the protestations of his critics."

The Eleventh Corps was unable to withstand attacks from the Confederate forces of General John B. Gordon and General George Doles. After the battle, General Barlow wrote: "We ought to have held the place easily... [but]... skirmishers had hardly attacked us before my men began to run. No fight at all was made." "Most accounts," Greene noted, "disagree with Barlow." General Henry J. Hunt, the Union artillery commander, described the fight as "an obstinate and bloody contest."

As the day progressed, it became increasingly difficult for Howard's men to hold their ground. By 4:00 p.m.,

Confederate attacks threatened to overrun what remained of organized Union resistance north and west of Gettysburg. "If you cannot hold out longer," Howard ordered, "you must fall back to the cemetery." Although some Confederate accounts support the notion that the Federals fled the field in disarray, Union General Carl Schurz claimed that this was far from the truth.

General Alexander Schimmelfennig crafted what Greene described as "his most enduring Civil War legacy" by accomplishing a "hairbreadth" escape from capture. He climbed a tall fence and played dead until the Rebels passed by, and then sought shelter in a pigsty, where he remained in safety for two-and-one-half days. Many in the corps were not so fortunate: over 1400 were taken as prisoners; roughly 2900 were killed and wounded.

Scholars and writers over the years have pointed to May 2 and July 1, 1863 as "twin disgraces for a unit deemed to be the weakest in the proud Army of the Potomac." "Is," Greene asked, "this image deserved?" To support his belief that it is not, he cited General Gordon's statement in which he called his opponents' July 1 performance "a most obstinate resistance."

"When... any... person brands the Eleventh Corps as a corps of cowards," a veteran of the 157th New York wrote after the war, "he is falsifying the record." It is Greene's conclusion that, although some tactical mistakes—several of which he discussed in detail in his talk—may have been made, the "Eleventh Corps performed with honor on July 1, 1863 and deserves a reputation better than the one it possesses."



Nominating Committee Report

Richard W. McAdoe, chairman of the Nominating Committee, has announced the following slate of officers for the 1991-1992 year:

President	Joseph L. Wishart
Senior Vice President	Mary Munsell Abroe
Vice President	Kurt Carlson
Vice President	Hal Ardell
Secretary	Wayne Anderson
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Trustee	Dale Weitman
Trustee*	Ted Birndorf

(*One-year term to complete the unexpired term of Carole Cierniak, who is nominated for the position of Assistant Treasurer.)

The election will be held during the May meeting, at which time additional nominations may be made from the floor. Three current trustees—L. Bradford Gregg, Adrienne Hanrahan, and Joyce Warshaw—will remain in office as they complete their two-year terms.

Round Table member Ernest A. Griffin was honored by Camp 1507 of the Sons of Confederate Veterans for conceiving and constructing the Heritage Memorial Wall, which commemorates those who fought in the Civil War—both North and South. Griffin was presented with a Certificate of Appreciation in a ceremony at the Confederate Mound at Oak Woods Cemetery on April 27.

The New Books compiled by C. Robert Douglas



Bigelow, John. *The Campaign of Chancellorsville*. Morningside Press. 1991. \$200.00. Original of 1910.

Braden, Waldo, ed. *Building the Myth: Selected Speeches Memorializing Abraham Lincoln*. University of Illinois Press. 1991. \$34.95.

Bridges, Hal. *Lee's Maverick General*. Olde Soldier Books, Inc. 1990. \$30.00. Original of 1961.

Brooks, U. R. *Butler and His Cavalry in the War of Secession, 1861-1865*. J. J. Fox, 9 Precipice Road, Camden, SC 29020. 1989. \$30.00. Original of 1909.

Driver, Robert J. *24th Virginia Infantry*. H.E. Howard, Inc. 1991. \$16.95.

Gragg, Rod. *Confederate Goliath: The Storming of Fort Fisher, January 1865*. Harper. 1991. \$25.00.

Nolan, Alan T. *Lee Considered: General Robert E. Lee and Civil War History*. University of North Carolina Press. 1991. \$22.50.

Sword, Wiley. *Embrace an Angry Wind: The South's Last Stand at Franklin and Nashville*. Harper. 1991. \$29.95.

Thompson, Robert M. & Richard Wainwright, eds. *Confidential Correspondence of Gustavus Vasa Fox*. Ayer Company Publishers, 50 Northwestern Dr. #10, P.O. Box 958, Salem, NH 03079. 1988. \$46.00.

Von Borcke, Heros & Justus Scheibert. *The Great Cavalry Battle of Brandy Station, 9 June 1863*. Translated from the German with historical commentary by Stuart T. Wright and F. D. Bridgewater. Foreword by Bell I. Wiley. Olde Soldier Books, Inc. 1990. \$25.00.

The history of The Round Table, The Civil War Round Table: Fifty Years of Scholarship and Fellowship, by Barbara Hughett, which made its debut at the fiftieth anniversary celebration, is available for \$30 per copy. You may order the book by writing The Round Table (add \$3 for postage and handling), or purchase a copy at the May meeting or at the Abraham Lincoln Book Shop, 357 West Chicago Avenue.

The Civil War Round Table of New York has presented its annual Baroness/Lincoln Award to New York Governor Mario M. Cuomo and Lincoln scholar Harold Holzer for their work on the Lincoln on Democracy Project. Cuomo and Holzer are co-editors of *Lincoln on Democracy* (1990), an anthology of Abraham Lincoln's writings about freedom, liberty, and self-determination, which was published in both Polish and English. Cuomo initiated the project at the request of Poland's Solidarity Union.

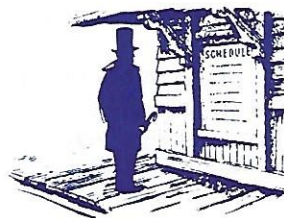
Schimmelfennig's Boutique

In addition to The Round Table history, the following items are available at each monthly meeting:

Lapel pins	\$ 5.00 each
Mugs	7.00 each
Meeting tapes	7.00 each
Fiftieth Anniversary photos	10.00 each

Proceeds from the sale of these items go to support the programs of The Civil War Round Table.

BULLETIN BOARD



Future Meetings

Regular meetings are held at the Holiday Inn Mart Plaza, 350 N. Orleans (Buttons, 15th Floor), the second Friday in each month, except as noted.

May 2-5: Annual Battlefield Tour—Shiloh.

May 10: Michael Hughes on "The Chattanooga Campaign of the Fall of 1863."

June 14: Jean Baker on "Parallel Lives: The Marriage of Abraham and Mary Lincoln."

July 13: Annual picnic.

September 13: Blake Magner on "Stannard's Second Vermont Brigade."

October 4-6: Tour to Springfield.

October 11: Gary W. Gallagher, Nevins-Freeman Address.

November 8: Alan T. Nolan on "General Robert E. Lee and Civil War History."

December 13: Mary Munsell Abroe on "Battlefield Preservation: The Early Years, 1863-1890."

New Members

John Brewster, 5744 West Irving Park Rd., Chicago, IL 60634, (312)777-4992

Erik A. Ernst, 901 Maple Ave., Evanston, IL 60202, (708)475-1438

Martha Mahan Haines, 1236 Lake Ave., Wilmette, IL 60091, (708)251-8691

Robert J. Maher, 1035 Washington, Oak Park, IL 60302

Karen J. Weber, 1942 W. Farwell Ave., Chicago, IL 60626, (312)508-0953



Former Illinois Governor James R. Thompson will address the annual luncheon of the Stephen A. Douglas Association on Saturday, June 1. His topic will be: "Stephen A. Douglas: Advocate of America First." The luncheon, which will begin at 12:30 p.m., will be held at the Prairie Restaurant of the Morton Hotel, 500 South Dearborn Street; it will be preceded by ceremonies at the Douglas Tomb, 636 East 35th Street, beginning at 11:00 a.m. The charge for the luncheon is \$25.00 per person. For further information or to make reservations, call (312)787-1860.

Youngstown State University and the Mahoning Valley Civil War Round Table, both in Ohio, are co-sponsoring the filming of a documentary on the Brandy Station battlefield—racing against time before much of the battlefield goes under a developer's bulldozer. Hugh Earnhart, professor of history at the university, said, "I hope that what [Ken] Burns did for the Civil War we will do for Brandy Station."

The Southeast Civil War Conference, with a focus on "The Civil War in North Georgia," will be held on May 16-18 in Marietta, Georgia. For information, contact Civil War Round Table Associates at (501)225-3996.