

THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

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March 1995

Ervin L. Jordan, Jr., on "Give Us a Flag: Afro-Confederate Loyalty in Civil War Virginia"

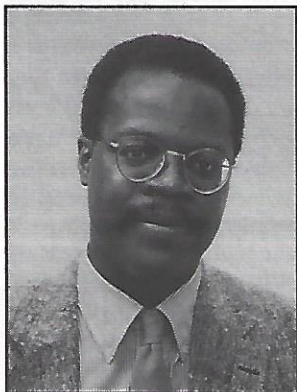
by Barbara Hughett

Most of us have an incomplete understanding of the role of African-Americans during the American Civil War. Eyewitness accounts, reminiscences, newspaper articles, and other sources indicate that approximately fifteen percent of Virginia's slaves and twenty-five percent of her free blacks were actually "Afro-Confederates"—blacks who supported and allied themselves with the Confederacy. They existed from the earliest days of the war until its end, and were also present in Confederate states other than Virginia.

On March 10, Professor Ervin L. Jordan, Jr., will speak on the topic of "Give Us a Flag: Afro-Confederate Loyalty in Civil War Virginia." His address will offer historical evidence for the existence of Afro-Confederates and will propose a new interpretation of the Civil War experiences of black Virginians as a racial minority in a paradoxical society of freedom and slavery. The majority of African-Americans, slave and free, lived in Virginia; therefore, the Afro-Virginian experience is considered to be representative of this phenomenon.

Afro-Confederate motivation may not be "politically correct," but like any other issue it must be examined in the context of several historical questions: Who were these black loyalists? What did they hope to gain by their support of the South? How did they explain their actions to fellow blacks? Were they active participants or merely a minor influence on Confederate policy? These questions and others will be explored in Professor Jordan's presentation.

Ervin L. Jordan, Jr., is the author of *Black Confederates and Afro-Yankees in Civil War Virginia*, published last month by the University Press of Virginia. John Y. Simon said of this book: "Jordan is the first scholar to understand and to explain slaves who fought for the Confederacy, and his portrayal of those who fought for freedom in equally compelling. Written with grace and empathy, this book will become a landmark in Civil War scholarship."



Ervin L. Jordan, Jr.

Jordan is assistant pro-



539th Regular Meeting

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Ervin L. Jordan, Jr., on "Give Us a Flag: Afro-Confederate Loyalty in Civil War Virginia"

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Friday, March 10

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Union League Club
65 West Jackson Boulevard

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

\$25 - The Civil War Round Table of Chicago members
\$30 - Nonmembers

Entree: Broiled Medallions of Pork Loin and Applesauce or Catch of the Day



Please Note

Make your reservation by Wednesday, March 8, by calling The Civil War Round Table offices at 312-341-1865. People who attend without having made a reservation will pay a \$5 walk-in charge. If you make a reservation and then find you cannot attend, please call to cancel or you will be billed for a dinner. **No last-minute orders for the Catch of the Day can be honored. The chef must have at least twenty-four hours notice.**

The Union League Club is located at the corner of Jackson Boulevard and Federal Street. Federal Street runs north and south between Dearborn and Clark Streets. Parking is free at the General Parking lot, just south of the Union League Club.

fessor and associate curator, Special Collections Department, at the Alderman Library of the University of Virginia. He is responsible for the arrangement of manuscript collections and document repairs, and specializes in Civil War and African-American history. He is the

(continued on page 3)

THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE



Founded December 3, 1940
 410 South Michigan Avenue, Suite 841
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 Phone: 312-341-1865
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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 Membership Committee, 410 South Michigan Avenue, Suite 841, Chicago, Illinois 60605-1402.

BATTLEFIELD PRESERVATION

☆ UPDATE ☆

by David Richert

Legislation to establish the Shenandoah National Battlefields has been reintroduced in the 104th Congress by Representative Frank R. Wolf of the 10th District of Virginia. H.R. 763 will establish a network of battlefields comprising about 2000 acres at Cedar Creek, Cross Keys, Fisher's Hill, McDowell, New Market, Opequon, Port Republic, Second Kernstown, Second Winchester, and Tom's Brook. As reported in the December newsletter, the bill was deferred by the 103rd Congress.

Round Table members supporting this measure are encouraged to contact their representatives, as well as members of the House Natural Resources Committee's subcommittee on National Parks. That subcommittee is chaired by Representative James V. Hansen, 2466 Rayburn Office Building, Washington, DC 20515. For a list of other members of the subcommittee, and further information about the bill, contact Mary Abroe, 212 Woodbine, Wilmette, Illinois 60091-3332; 708-251-4745.

The Rappahannock Valley Civil War Round Table's third annual conference on battlefield preservation will be held March 25-26 in Fredericksburg, Virginia. The theme of this year's conference, which is cosponsored by the National Park Service's American Battlefield Protection Program, is "Preserving Virginia's Civil War Heritage."

Sessions will explore four major periods in the region's Civil War history: Winchester, Harpers Ferry, the 1862 Valley Campaign, and the 1864 Valley Campaign. Speakers will include APCWS President Dennis Frye and Past President Wilson Greene. Robert K. Krick and Greg Mertz will lead a bus tour of Port Republic and Cross Keys. The cost of the entire conference is \$75, with all proceeds donated to battlefield preservation in the Rappahannock Valley. To register, or for further information, call Mac Wyckoff at 703-786-2470.

The Perryville Battlefield State Historic Site has begun acquiring land that will greatly expand its boundaries. In January the Perryville Enhancement Project (PEP) paid \$80,000, for 4.6 acres, and is close to acquiring another 145. PEP ultimately hopes to acquire fifteen parcels to enlarge the battlefield and to build a museum and visitors center. Funding for the project comes from a \$2.5 million grant from the federal Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act. The parcel acquired in January is the first addition to the battlefield in eighteen years.

The Conservation Fund of Arlington, Virginia has transferred land to Pecos National Historical Park to help preserve New Mexico's Glorieta Pass, the West's most important Civil War battlefield and a key site on the Santa Fe Trail. The Fund had previously transferred to the park fifty acres on the battlefield, including Sharpshooter's Ridge and Pigeon's Ranch, the site of the battle's fiercest fighting on March 28, 1862. The park now consists of 6671 acres. The Conservation Fund acquires land to protect it from development until the National Park Service is able to buy it. In this way the land is obtained before speculation drives up the cost.



☛ FEBRUARY MEETING ☛

by Larry Gibbs

On February 17, Ralph G. Newman, founder of The Civil War Round Table, gave a reflective speech to 107 members and guests at the 538th regular meeting of the group he founded. Newman effectively used many reminiscences—some humorous, some sad—in his presentation, “A Handful of Lincoln and Civil War Authors.” His reflections of these colorful historians were enthusiastically received.

Among the more interesting personalities he profiled were Paul Angle and E.B. (Pete) Long. According to Newman, “Angle’s reputation was enhanced when he was able to prove that some papers, published in a contemporary magazine, purporting to indicate Abraham Lincoln’s affection for Ann Rutledge, were a fraud. The best-known book written by Angle is *The Lincoln Reader* (1947), a compilation of some of the best writing on Lincoln’s life, by sixty-five authors.

Pete Long desired a full-time job as a historian when he first met Newman. When Bruce Catton asked Newman to recommend an assistant for him, Newman immediately suggested Long as a researcher. After Long, with his wife Barbara, wrote the highly acclaimed *The Civil War Day by Day* (1971), Catton said, “Pete Long knows more about the Civil War than any other person.” It was Long who completed the final volume of the monumental study by Allan Nevins, *The Ordeal of the Union* (1947-71). In a sad moment, Newman recalled the events of March 30, 1981. At noon, Newman introduced him at a gathering in Chicago; later that evening, Long died of a heart attack at the Allerton Hotel.”

“Bruce Catton was perhaps the best-known speaker to address The Civil War Round Table,” Newman stated. Catton had been a journalist for years before he turned his attention to the Civil War. His first book was *The Warlords of Washington* (1948). Ironically, this book was about another war—World War II. In the 1950s, Catton wrote the classic three volume study, *The Army of the Potomac*. Newman said that “Catton was a remarkable man and great wordsmith; later he became the editor of *American Heritage* magazine.”

In the early stages of The Round Table, one of its great characters was founding member Otto Eisenschiml. He developed the very controversial theory involving Secretary of War Stanton in Lincoln’s assassination. At Round Table meetings, he always challenged the speaker, taking the opposite point-of-view. Newman said that an electric atmosphere pervaded the meetings whenever Eisenschiml rose to ask a question. The process, he said, stretched the minds of the speaker and the audience.

Perhaps the most famous of all Lincoln biographers was Carl Sandburg. Born in Galesburg, Illinois, in 1878, Sandburg became one of the best-known poets and authors of American literature. However, Newman claimed that all of “Sandburg’s work was not history, but poetry.” Newman said that “Sandburg was too anxious to believe all stories about Lincoln’s life.” He sometimes found it difficult to separate myth from reality.

When Sandburg died in July, 1967, United States President Lyndon B. Johnson asked Newman to compose a tribute. President Johnson gave this address at the Lincoln Memorial. Later, Newman issued his own tribute

to Sandburg, using some of the language in Johnson’s tribute. A newspaperman criticized Newman’s speech because he had “stolen” a section of Johnson’s speech.

Newman also reminisced about Allan Nevins, Douglas Southall Freeman, Avery Craven, Lloyd Lewis, and T. Harry Williams. “Nevins had fantastic knowledge,” stressed Newman. He could lecture on any subject of history at any time. Freeman, a Virginia gentleman, wrote superbly about George Washington and Robert E. Lee. One of the greatest academic Round Table speakers was Craven, a die-hard exponent of The Southern Cause.

Lloyd Lewis, with his book, *Sherman, The Fighting Prophet* (1932), became emotionally involved with his subject. “He rejected a bland nonpartisan, detached view of history, giving us an intimate feeling of Civil War soldiers and leaders,” asserted Newman. Williams was a very demonstrative and great historian, also.

To conclude, Newman claimed to be a very fortunate man. He said that he “came on the scene when all of these wonderful characters came along. All of these historians were wonderful, kind, wise contributors to the study of Civil War history.” All had tremendous enthusiasm for their chosen profession. As one of these men stated, “Writing Civil War history sure beats work.”

JORDAN (continued from page 1)

author of *Charlottesville and the University of Virginia in the Civil War* (1988) and the coauthor of *19th Virginia Infantry* (1987).

A native of Norfolk, Virginia, Jordan is a graduate (*cum laude*) of Norfolk State University and holds a masters of arts degree in archival administration from Old Dominion University. He has written numerous articles for scholarly and professional journals. Among his honors and awards are the Floyd W. Crawford Award (three-time recipient) and the H. H. Clay Humane Award. Jordan was the 1994 recipient of the Old Dominion University chapter of the National Honor Society’s *Phi Kappa Phi* Award as outstanding alumnus. Since April 1994, he has been an associate of the United States Civil War Center at Louisiana State University.

President’s Note

For the fourth (and last) time in this century, Good Friday falls on April 14, as it did in 1865 when our sixteenth president, Abraham Lincoln, was assassinated. It is the first time this has occurred since 1933. Because of this unusual historic significance, we are holding our April meeting this year at its regular time on the second Friday of the month, April 14. Our speaker is one of the world’s leading authorities on the assassination of President Lincoln, Professor William Hanchett, who will speak on “Lincoln’s Assassination After 130 Years.” We hope that Christians commemorating Good Friday and Jews observing Passover will respect our reasons for this scheduling and will not be offended. Thank you very much for your understanding. We hope that many of you will be with us as we commemorate the 130th anniversary of the assassination of President Lincoln on Good Friday, April 14, 1995.

The New Books

Compiled by C. Robert Douglas



- McCammom, Charles S., ed. *Loyal Mountain Troopers: The Second and Third Tennessee Volunteer Cavalry in the Civil War: Reminiscences of Lt. John W. Andes and Major Will A. Mateer*. Blount County Genealogical & Historical Society, P.O. Box 4986, Maryville, TN 37802-4986. 1993. \$30.00
- McCarthy, Carlton. *Detailed Minutiae of Soldier Life in the Army of Northern Virginia, 1861-1865*. U. of Nebraska Press. 1993. Pbk. \$9.95. Original of 1882.
- Miers, Earl Schenck, ed. *A Rebel War Clerk's Diary by John B. Jones*. LSU Press. 1993. Pbk. \$16.95. Original of 1958.
- Miller, William J. *Mapping for Stonewall — The Civil War Service of Jed Hotchkiss*. Elliott & Clark Publishing, P.O. Box 21365, Washington, DC 20009. 1993. \$29.95.
- Mitchell, Reid. *The Vacant Chair — The Northern Soldier Leaves Home*. Oxford University Press. 1993. \$25.00.
- Moe, Richard. *The Last Full Measure: The Life and Death of the First Minnesota Volunteers*. Henry Holt & Co. 1993. \$29.95.
- Mokin, Arthur. *Ironclad — The Monitor and the Merrimack*. Presidio Press. 1991. \$22.50.
- Neal, Diana & Thomas W. Kremm. *Lion of the South — Gen'l. Thomas C. Hindman*. Mercer U. Press, 1400 Coleman Ave., Macon, GA 31207. 1993. \$24.95.
- Nevins, Allan, ed. *A Diary of Battle: The Personal Journal of Col. Charles S. Wainwright, 1861-1865*. Stan Clark Military Books. 1993. \$35.00. Original of 1962.
- Pauley, Michael J. *Unreconstructed Rebel: The Life of Gen. John McCausland, C.S.A.* Pictorial Histories Publ. Co., Inc., 713 South Third, Missoula, MT 59801. 1993. Pbk. \$9.95.

Round Table past president Mary Abroe will present a paper at the joint meeting of the Organization of American Historians/National Council on Public History on April 25 in Washington, DC. The title is "Memorial Landscapes as Policy Tools: Civil War Parks and the New Deal."

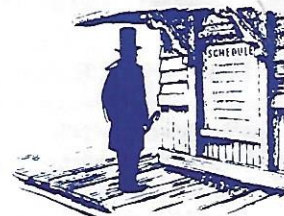
Schimmelfennig Boutique

The history of The Round Table, *The Civil War Round Table: Fifty Years of Scholarship and Fellowship*, by Barbara Hughett, is available for \$30 per copy. You may purchase the book at the monthly meeting or order it from Morningside Bookshop, 260 Oak Street, Dayton, Ohio 45401 (1-800-648-9710). Add \$2.50 for postage and handling.

In addition to The Round Table history and *The Continuing Civil War*, the essays from the Fiftieth Anniversary Proceedings, the following items are available at each monthly meeting: Lapel pins, Mugs, Meeting Tapes, Civil War Buff posters and T-Shirts, CWRT T-shirts, polos, and sweatshirts.

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 Union League Club, 65 West Jackson Boulevard, the second Friday in each month, except as noted.
- March 10:* Ervin L. Jordan, Jr., on "Give Us a Flag: Afro-Confederate Loyalty in Civil War Virginia"
- April 14:* William Hanchett on "Lincoln's Assassination After 130 Years"
- May 3-7:* Annual Spring Battlefield Tour—Charleston, Columbia, and Savannah
- May 12:* Tamara Moser Melia on "James B. McPherson and the Ideals of the Old Army"
- June 9:* John Y. Simon on "Forging a Commander: Ulysses S. Grant and the First Year of the Civil War"

New Members

- Babs R. Chicoine, 2301 Mecan Drive, Naperville, IL 60564, 708-961-9261
- Edward S. Jackson, 645 South Belmont Avenue, Arlington Heights, IL 60005, 708-253-5800
- Paul T. Riel, 8540 LeClaire, Skokie, IL 60077, 708-677-3217
- Martin W. Teague, 2 S. 170 Huntington Court, Glen Ellyn, IL 60137, 708-469-1361

Former Round Table President Paul I. Klinger will be one of the featured speakers at the 17th Annual Confederate Historical Institute, to be held on April 6-8 in Albuquerque, New Mexico. The theme this year is "The Confederate Invasion of New Mexico." Among the other speakers are Edwin C. Bearss, Jerry L. Russell, and Jerry Rogers. For information, call Jerry Russell at 501-225-3996.

The last living grandchild of Robert E. Lee died recently at the age of 94. Mary Custis Lee deButts, of Upperville, Virginia, was the daughter of Robert E. Lee, Jr., and Juliet Carter Lee. She was one of five grandchildren of the former Confederate general, according to the Robert E. Lee Memorial Association. She is survived by one daughter, two sons, ten grandchildren, and nine great-grandchildren.

The release of twenty Civil War stamps in the summer of 1995 will mark the most extensive effort in the history of the United States Postal Service to review and verify the historical accuracy of stamp subjects. Historians, biographers, and artists have been at work for over a year, checking every last detail of the Civil War stamps, the second installment in the "Classic Collection" series. "We're now getting down to recommendations like 'Jackson's horse's ears weren't quite so dark at the tips,'" stamp artist Mark Hess remarked. "But two experts pointed that out, so I made the change."