

THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

Volume XLI, Number 8

Chicago, Illinois

April, 1981

400TH REGULAR MEETING OF THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

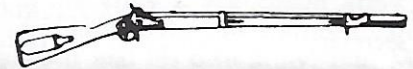
On December 3, 1940, 15 men gathered at the Bismarck Hotel to hear Percival G. Hart speak on "Stonewall Jackson's Valley Campaign." That event was the first regular meeting of The Civil War Round Table. Since then 399 regular meetings have been held, and this month, on the 10th, we will celebrate our 400th. It will be an appropriately gala evening featuring music, reminiscences, and the usual good fun and fellowship.

The Master of Ceremonies will be our founder, Ralph G. Newman, who will provide us with a brief history of The Round Table and introduce past presidents, each of whom will speak for a few minutes about the high- (and low-) lights of his administration. In addition, Ward Smidl and the reknowned Schimmelfennig Singers will perform "Songs of the Sixties." And, before and after the program, material from The Round Table archives will be on display.

The evening's activities will continue a tradition which has developed of celebrating significant Round Table anniversaries. The first time they did so was on the occasion of the 100th regular meeting held on February 16, 1951, at the University Club. Although The Round Table was still young then, they already had a lot to look back on. For example, election of regular officers and adoption of a constitution and bylaws in 1945 and incorporation on October 17, 1949. Also, they recalled the discussion between Carl Sandburg, Ralph Newman and Elmer Gertz over the "Diary of a Public Man;" Lloyd Miller's colorful account of the Battle of Franklin; the public opening of the Robert Todd Lincoln papers in the Library of Congress with 37 members present; and much more.

But this was only the beginning for The Round Table—much lay ahead. In June, 1951, the first Battlefield Tour (to Nashville, Franklin, Chickamauga and Cumberland Gap) was held and a history of The Round Table was published. On October 17, 1952, 121 men came to the bungalow atop the Sherman Hotel to hear William H. Townsend's one and one-half hour speech on Cassius Marcellus Clay (it was accompanied by the brandishing of two bowie knives owned by Clay and the pistol given him by Lincoln). In April, 1953, there was Bruce Catton's talk on "Sheridan at Five Forks;" Douglas Southall Freeman's last public address on the Civil War during the Battlefield Tour to Richmond in May, 1953; and publication of the first monthly newsletter in September, 1959.

All of this was remembered at the 20th Anniversary meeting on November 4, 1960 when the first speaker, Percival Hart, returned to speak on "Chancellorsville." Then, at



400th REGULAR MEETING

* * *

ROUND TABLE HISTORY

BY

RALPH G. NEWMAN

* * *

MEMORABLE MOMENTS

RECOUNTED BY PAST PRESIDENTS

* * *

"SONGS OF THE SIXTIES"
SCHIMMELFENNIG SINGERS

* * *

FRIDAY, APRIL 10, 1981

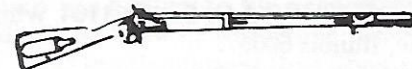
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Como Inn

546 N. Milwaukee

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

Cost: \$12.50 (includes wine with dinner)



the Silver Anniversary meeting on December 14, 1965, General Mark Clark spoke on "America's Wars" and Win Stracke sang a special song, "Part of Me," which he had written for the occasion. Ver Lynn Sprague also recalled for the members the Round Table's history, and especially a number of events of significance since the 20th anniversary. For instance, in September, 1964, a \$3,000 Fellowship

(Continued on page 2.)

THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE



FOUNDED DECEMBER 3, 1940

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

OFFICERS

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Senior Vice President Robert H. Franke
Vice President Marvin Sanderman
Vice President Donald E. Anderson
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Assistant Secretary Henry Pomerantz
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Contributing Editors Richard E. Clark
Marshall D. Krolick
Founding Newsletter Editor: Gil Twiss, 1954-1968

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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400th Regular Meeting Festivities Glen Wiche
Registrar Margaret April

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.



Texana II: Cultural Heritage of the Plantation South, a three-day seminar on the Civil War era in East Texas, will be held June 4-6, 1981 at the Excelsior Hotel in Jefferson, Texas. The program is the second in a series of annual Texana Conferences planned by the Texas Historical Commission. For further information, contact Kirsten Mullen, Texas Historical Commission, Box 12276, Austin, Texas 78711.

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Award had been established, with the generous assistance of Lloyd Miller, to help graduate students with their dissertations on Civil War history. Also, The Round Table had received an Award of Merit from the Illinois Civil War Centennial Committee and the National Civil War Centennial Commission Medallion.

At the 300th meeting on April 2, 1971, Ralph Newman spoke on "The Civil War Round Table—We Point With Pride," recalling such momentous events as Marshall Krolick's first quiz in September, 1968, and otherwise bringing our history up-to-date. But that was 10 years ago and now there is much "recent history" to be recalled—creation of the Nevins-Freeman Award in 1974; development of The Round Table-sponsored Civil War and American History Research Collection at The Chicago Public Library Cultural Center in 1975; and admission of women to membership in 1977.

All these recent events, as well as those of earlier years, will be recounted by Ralph and the many past presidents who plan to attend the 400th meeting. And, as a memento of the evening, a special commemorative program has been prepared. Clearly, the 400th meeting, like earlier anniversaries, will be an event to long remember.

Other Round Tables celebrating anniversaries recently included Louisville, Salt Creek, and Richmond. Louisville held its 20th anniversary celebration on January 18. Over 140 people heard founder of that Round Table Frank Rankin and George McWhorter present "The Civil War in Song, Story and Poetry." On February 6 the Salt Creek Round Table held its 150th regular meeting; Marshall Krolick spoke on "The Battle of Brandy Station." Finally, the 30th Anniversary Program of the Richmond Round Table on February 12 featured Francis F. Wilshin on "First Manassas in Light of New Discoveries—The Official David Bullock Harris Maps."

The Arkansas Department of Parks & Tourism recently acquired 65 acres adjacent to Prairie Grove Battlefield State Park. The land was purchased with monies from Arkansas Land Bank Trust Fund administered by the Natural Heritage Commission; ownership was then transferred to the Department of Parks & Tourism.

The Park was established in 1908 when the Prairie Grove Chapter of the Daughters of the Confederacy purchased nine acres as a memorial to those killed during the battle. Prairie Grove Battlefield Commission was created in 1958 and it later became a part of the Department of Parks and Tourism. The newly-acquired property was involved in important action during the battle. As money becomes available, the Department will restore the land to its condition at the time of the battle—a Civil War era orchard will be re-established, crops of corn and wheat will be planted and rail fences built.

We have learned with sadness of the passing, on March 2 in Pacific Palisades, California, of past president Marshall W. Rissman. Rissman, 58, served as president in 1957-58. Our sincere condolences are extended to his family.

MARCH MEETING

"Well, General Stuart, you are here at last." This, as Marshall Krolick explained to the 130 members and guests who attended The Round Table meeting on March 13, was how Robert E. Lee greeted J.E.B. Stuart on July 2, 1863 at Gettysburg. For eight days Lee had neither seen nor heard from him; it "seemed like Stuart had vanished from the face of the earth." The effect of Stuart's absence on the Confederate defeat at Gettysburg, Marshall said, is one of the major points of contention in the continuing argument about that battle.

But, as Marshall noted, the story of Stuart's action in the Gettysburg campaign really begins on June 9 at Brandy Station, Virginia. At that time Lee was at Culpepper ready to set forth on his invasion of the north the next day. However, his plans were interrupted by the Union Cavalry under Alfred Pleasonton, which assaulted Stuart's camp at Brandy Station. Although the Union troopers finally pulled back, they were not beaten as they always had been before; they had fought the Confederates to a standstill. But more important, Stuart had been surprised by their attack, and he was severely criticized in the southern press.

The next day Lee ordered the major move north to begin; after a short delay, Stuart screened the army from discovery by the Union forces. By the night of June 16 Stuart was near Ashby's and Snicker's Gaps; the only barrier between him and the Federal forces to the east was the Bull Run Mountains. On the 17th, the Union cavalry, attempting to learn about Confederate movements, fought Confederate cavalry at Aldie and Middleburg. But, they were stopped and heavy rains prevented much further action until June 21. On the 21st Pleasonton was ordered forward with infantry. Stuart fought delaying actions but finally pulled back to Upperville, and then to Ashby's Gap. Unfortunately for the north, however, the Union forces broke off the fight at that point. As Marshall explained, had they pushed on and gained the Gap, they could have seen Longstreet and Hill posed for the invasion west of the Blue Ridge Mountains.

It was now June 22 and Pleasonton, who had been fighting almost continuously for several days, pulled back to rest. As at Brandy Station, the northern farm boys who made up the cavalry had proved themselves; but, the intentions of the Confederates had not been discovered. At the same time, Marshall explained, Stuart's reputation had not been redeemed. He was present at the battles of the previous days, but he had exercised little personal control, delegating it instead to his brigade commanders. Marshall said that this fact is often cited as evidence that he was not out to regain glory. However, in Marshall's opinion defensive screening was just not Stuart's style—he was waiting for an opening to achieve offensive success. And, after Upperville, he felt the time was at hand to take the offensive.

At this point there began three days of communications crucial to the outcome of the Battle of Gettysburg. Lee wanted Stuart to leave two brigades to watch the Federals and to send three brigades with the army as it moved north. However, Stuart proposed that he go east over the Bull Run Mountains, through the widely-scattered Union army, cross the Potomac and destroy the canal and railroad, and then join Ewell in Maryland. This would also draw the Union cavalry east, away from the Confederate army.

Lee agreed, but emphasized the need to cross the River and join the army as soon as possible. However, the next day he began to have second thoughts and sent further messages to Stuart, through Longstreet, regarding the nature of

Stuart's movements. Then, the next day he sent yet another message. Thus, by June 24 Stuart had two letters from Lee and one from Longstreet; all three were contradictory and confusing. In fact, Marshall noted, no one even today can agree on what Stuart was supposed to do.

Stuart feasted on the flamboyant and the spectacular anyway, and given his desire to overcome the stigma of Brandy Station, Marshall feels that in light of such discretionary orders his actions were predictable. By the evening of June 24 he had three brigades ready to move east of the Bull Run Mountains; they began their movement that night. However, as they passed Buckland the next day they discovered the Federals were moving north. Stuart's movement was blocked and he had two choices—turn back or go around the Federal army to the southeast. Several factors should have entered into Stuart's thinking at this point. Since the Federals were moving north, it appeared they knew what the Confederates were up to, and Lee had emphasized rejoining the army if the Union army moved north. Also, by riding around the Union army Stuart would put it between himself and his own army. But, Marshall said, Stuart apparently never took these factors into account. He simply did not want to turn back—there was no adventure in it, and to do so would not restore his reputation.

Thus, on June 26 he began his movement around the Union army. By the 28th he was across the Potomac and interrupted movement on the Chesapeake and Ohio canal (capturing several boatloads of grain). He then destroyed the telegraph lines at Rockville and captured 125 federal supply wagons. Although he tore up the railroad at Hood's Mill and Sykesville, he failed to capture any trains.

Stuart's movement was now hindered by the 125 wagons (but he would not abandon them because, as Marshall explained, they were a badge of glory). He marched toward Jefferson after fighting Kilpatrick at Hanover, but his men were exhausted and the mules, without food and water, were becoming unmanageable. He was groping blindly for Lee now, and, having heard that Lee might go to Harrisburg, decided to move to Carlisle, halfway between Shippensburg and Harrisburg. Stuart found Carlisle defended and called for its surrender (even though his men were too exhausted to fight). But, he soon learned Lee was at Gettysburg, and hurried to join him there.

But what effect did Stuart's absence really have? Marshall noted that Lee wrote two reports after the battle in which he said that the "absence of the cavalry rendered it impossible to obtain information", and that "he had to move more slowly and was much embarrassed by the absence of the cavalry." However, Marshall feels that this assessment was exaggerated—he had other cavalry (Imboden, for example) who could have been sent to the right flank to make up for Stuart's absence.

Stuart himself was hesitant to file a report which would appear to indicate he knew he was wrong; when he finally did submit it it was less flamboyant than usual and he went to great lengths to justify the soundness of his decision. But, as Marshall concluded, "when all is said and done it is clear Stuart was not where he should have been, where Lee wanted him." Thus a major share of the blame for the failure at Gettysburg must be placed on Stuart who abused his discretion in search of glory. As Marshall said, "truly, for Lee and the Confederacy, Stuart's road to Gettysburg had not lead to glory but to defeat."

THE NEW BOOKS



Compiled by Dick Clark)
Brown, Louis A. *The Salisbury Prison. A Case Study of Confederate Military Prisons 1861-1865.* Wendell, North Carolina: Avera Press, Broadfoot's Bookmark, 1980. 204 p., map, illus. \$15.00

Conger, Arthur Latham. *The Rise of U.S. Grant.* New York: Arno Press. \$21.00. Reprint of 1931 issue.

Coulter, Ellis Merton. *Travels in the Confederate States. A Bibliography.* Wendell, North Carolina, 1981. \$25.00. Reprint of 1948 issue.

Hill, Sarah Jane Full. *Mrs. Hill's Journal—Civil War Reminiscences.* Edited by Mark M. Krug. Chicago: The Lakeside Press, 1980. xlvii, 350 p., illus. Privately issued.

Jones, Douglas C. *Elkhorn Tavern.* New York: 1980. \$12.95. Fiction.

Keneally, Thomas. *Confederates.* New York: Harper & Row, 1979. \$12.95. Fiction.

Logan, John A. *The Volunteer Soldier of America.* With memoir of the author and military reminiscences from General Logan's private journal. New York: Arno Press. \$44.00. Original of 1887.

McDonough, James Lee. *Stones River—Bloody Winter in Tennessee.* Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1980. 271 p., maps, illus. \$14.50

McFeely, William S. *Grant: A Biography.* New York: Norton, 1981. 592 p., illus. \$19.95

Nesbitt, Mark. *If the South Won Gettysburg.* Concept by Paul S. Witt. Gettysburg, Pa.: Reliance Publishing Co., 1980. Pbk \$2.50

Shippen, Edward. *Thirty Years at Sea: The Story of a Sailor's Life.* New York: Arno Press. \$22.00. Original of 1879.

Slotkin, Richard. *The Crater.* New York: Atheneum, 1981. 558 p., maps. \$17.95. Fiction.

A previously unknown photograph of Jefferson Davis, and a letter accompanying it, were discovered in a box of miscellaneous papers last summer in a storage room at the Old Court House Museum in Vicksburg. The papers had been given to the Museum about 20 years ago by the late Annie McCardle. The photo and letter were sent to Col. William H. McCardle in February, 1868. Vicksburg photographers Herrick and Dirr took the photo on Davis's first visit home after his release from Fortress Monroe in Virginia. The Library of Congress has confirmed that the photo is one previously unknown.

The Military Order of the Stars and Bars has announced the creation of the General George S. Patton, Jr., Essay Award "to encourage scholarly, original research into the lives of Commissioned Officers of the rank of Colonel or below who served in the Armed Forces of the Confederate States or their allies." The contest is open to undergraduates in any recognized institution of higher learning; First prize, \$500. Entry deadline is May 20, 1981. For further information, Adjutant in Chief, M.O.S. & B., Box 5164, Southern Station, Hattiesburg, Mississippi 39401.

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.

April 10: 400th Regular Meeting.

April 29-May 3: Annual Battlefield Tour to Vicksburg.

May 8: Archie P. McDonald on "Jed Hotchkiss, Jackson's Topographer".

June 5: Nevins-Freeman Award Dinner and installation of officers. Recipient of award: James I. Robertson, Jr.

Every Monday: Informal noon luncheon meetings at Wieboldt's Men's Grill, 9th Floor, State and Madison; all members welcome.

NEW MEMBERS

Thomas A. Arliskas, 401 Sansouci Drive, Aurora, Illinois 60505 (312) 896-9204. Tom works for Sears in Joliet and is interested in military aspects of the War.

John A. Muchoney, 2851 Scott Street, Des Plaines, Illinois 60018 (312) 296-4880. John works at Pioneer Bank in Chicago and is interested in military and social aspects of the War.

Dick Tibbals, 738 Hinman Avenue, Evanston, Illinois 60202 (312) 864-5833. Dick is employed by Lee King Partners, Advertising in Chicago. His primary interest is military matters.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Matthias E. Lorenz, 2875 West 19th Street, Chicago, Illinois 60623.

A display of artifacts associated with Lincoln and Grant is now on display (through May 1) in the U.S. National Guard Association's Memorial Hall in Washington, D.C. The exhibit, which was assembled by the Illinois National Guard, contains such items as the gold and silver inlaid sword Grant received after the fall of Vicksburg; portraits of both Grant and Lincoln; life masks of Lincoln done in 1860 and on his last birthday in 1865; a Spencer rifle reportedly test-fired by Lincoln; and a crystal wine glass and plate bearing Grant's initials. Most of the items are from the Illinois National Guard's collection, although there are artifacts loaned by others. Richard Blake was on hand to portray Lincoln at the opening of the exhibit February 4.

The speaker at this year's annual dinner meeting of the Lincoln Fellowship of Wisconsin will be Ralph Newman. Ralph will speak on "Robert Todd Lincoln: Distinguished Son of a Great American." The dinner is scheduled for April 26 at the historic Cedarburg Inn.