

# THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

Volume XLII, Number 2

Chicago, Illinois

October, 1981

## DOUBLEHEADER EVENING: AUTOGRAPHING PARTY AND KENNETH HAFENDORFER ON THE BATTLE OF PERRYVILLE

An autographing party with the author of the recently-published *Perryville—Battle for Kentucky*, Kenneth Hafendorfer, and a talk by him on that battle will highlight The Round Table meeting of October 9. The autographing party will be held at the Abraham Lincoln Book Shop from 3:30-5:30 p.m. The dinner and talk will be at the Como Inn as usual.

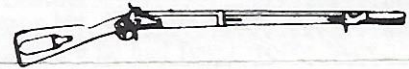
The Battle of Perryville, or Chaplin Hills, Kentucky, which took place on October 8, 1862, was the climax of Confederate General Braxton Bragg's campaign to reoccupy Tennessee and conquer Kentucky. Chasing him as he moved northward was Union General Don Carlos Buell. Although neither commander intended to fight at Perryville, the two armies blundered into one another. Buell, in fact, was so taken by surprise that he did not even know a fight was going on until it was almost over. Half of his army never even took part.



Although the fight was essentially a standoff, Bragg concluded that his campaign was a failure and drew off into eastern Tennessee. Thus, Perryville can be considered one of the turning points of the Civil War. Like Antietam, which took place shortly before, Perryville marked the end of a major Confederate thrust into the north. Had Bragg been successful at Perryville, and thus in his invasion, it could have made a major difference in the outcome of the War.

In addition to the fact that Perryville was an important battle, there are several less significant but interesting aspects to it. One is the fact that it was General P.H. Sheridan's first battle as a divisional commander. In addition, there were several natural phenomena that figured into the battle such as the lack of water (Kentucky was in the midst of a drought) which brought both armies to Doctor's Creek where the first skirmish took place; and the strange winds which caused some troops to be unaware of what was going on only 100 yards away.

Dr. Kenneth Hafendorfer, M.D., is a native of Louisville, Kentucky and is now in active medical practice there. He received both his undergraduate and medical degrees from the University of Louisville and has been a member of the Louisville Round Table for many years, serving as its president in 1977-78. For 13 years he has been involved in an intense study of Perryville. In his talk he plans to cover the events and circumstances which led the opposing armies to Perryville and, with the aid of three large wall maps, he will present a detailed description of the battle "as it has never before been told."



404th REGULAR MEETING

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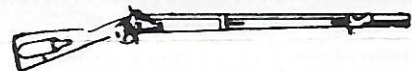
KENNETH HAFENDORFER  
ON  
THE BATTLE OF PERRYVILLE

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FRIDAY, OCTOBER 9, 1981

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Como Inn  
546 N. Milwaukee  
Cocktails at 5:30 p.m. Dinner at 6:30 p.m.



### AUTOGRAPHING PARTY

From 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. on October 9, just prior to the regular meeting, there will be an autographing party at the Abraham Lincoln Book Shop, 18 East Chestnut Street, Chicago, in honor of Kenneth Hafendorfer and his new book, *Perryville—Battle for Kentucky*. All members and their guests are cordially invited. If you are unable to attend, you may order an autographed copy by calling the Book Shop, 944-3085.

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

An important Executive Committee meeting will be held at the Como Inn at 5 p.m. on October 9, just prior to the regular meeting. All current officers, trustees, and committee chairman, as well as all past presidents, are urged to attend.

# THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE



FOUNDED DECEMBER 3, 1940

18 East Chesnut Street  
Chicago, Illinois 60611  
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 Ward C. Smidl, 1104 Whippoorwill Lane, Palatine, Illinois 60067.



The electric map at Gettysburg, site of our 1982 Battlefield Tour, is being repainted by Russell Hendrickson of Springfield, Virginia. Hendrickson is the retired chief of the Division of Museums and Exhibits for the National Park Service. The goal is to paint the fields and woods in shades of greens and golds the way they would have appeared when the battle took place in July, 1863. Hendrickson is using three maps of the era as reference.

## from the Editor's pen



Over the years we have seen many—too many—instances of housing and industrial developments encroaching upon the boundaries of our battlefield parks and destroying other Civil War sites. But, although it happens so often, it doesn't get any easier to take the next time we hear of such desecration of our national heritage. The most recent case that has come to our attention is the dividing up and selling for homesites of Sentry Woods in Charles County, Maryland. As many know, Sentry Woods was where the 8th Illinois Cavalry camped during their search for John Wilkes Booth following Lincoln's assassination.

A full page ad in the Washington Post on August 27 promoted homesites in Sentry Woods. What was so appalling about the ad was the fact that it played on the historic importance and unspoiled beauty of this area. The copy began with a description of the historic significance of Sentry Woods and concluded by stating, "And now you have a chance to own one of its uniquely historic homesites." To add further insult to injury the ad was embellished with woodcuts of Booth and a soldier in front of a cannon, further developing the historical theme.

The first question that comes to mind is, "if this area is so historically significant, why are you dividing it up and selling it off?" Of course, we know the answer—the developer, Interstate General Corporation, doesn't care about history, they simply want to make a lot of money off this land. The second question then becomes, "what can we do about it?" That answer is not so easy.

It appears that little has been done at this point with regard to actual development—the ad talks about roads to be built, etc. Perhaps it isn't too late to launch a campaign to save this historic area. For example, letters to your senators, representatives, and the National Park Service might result in the designation of this property as a national historic site.

It seems a terrible shame to lose, after almost 120 years, a site of historic importance such as this, and especially one so close to our nation's capital where it is accessible to so many. Even if the natural beauty of the area is maintained, as Interstate General says will be the case, the value of Sentry Woods as a historic site will be lost forever once the land is divided and sold. We urge you to write now and at least try to save Sentry Woods for posterity.

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No one knows for sure if the bell in the town park in Saxeville, Wisconsin came from Jefferson Davis's plantation in Mississippi, but Vicksburg would like to have it anyway. Unfortunately, Saxeville doesn't want to give it up. According to Gordon Cotton, director of the Old Courthouse Museum in Vicksburg, legend has it that Union soldiers looted the plantation of Davis in 1862 and hauled away the two-foot-high dinner bell, possibly to Saxeville. He acknowledges, however, that the plaque on the base of the bell in Saxeville says it was taken in Corinth, which is on the other side of the state.

Cotton and Bertram Hayes-Davis, a descendant of Jefferson Davis and president of the Davis Family Association, sent letters asking Saxeville to return the bell. They suggested a Confederate soldier be sent for a transfer ceremony and that the bell be transported to Vicksburg via the Mississippi on the Delta Queen. Saxeville, however, said "the bell is in our park, and we want to keep it."

## SEPTEMBER MEETING

The not-so-fine art of lying, as practiced by some Civil War generals, was Dr. Albert Castel's subject when he addressed the 86 members and guests who attended The Round Table meeting September 11. Using the reports and memoirs of several generals, and comparing what they said with other reports and documents, he demonstrated some of the techniques of "playing fast and loose with the truth," used by these men.

Dr. Castel's first example was Confederate General Sterling Price who was active in the Trans-Mississippi and who achieved early fame at Lexington, Missouri when he captured the Union garrison. One of the reasons for the Confederate success was their use of bales of hemp as a movable barricade. According to Dr. Castel, in his report of the action Price gave the distinct impression that using the bales was his idea (Castel noted that General Harris also took credit for the idea). But, in fact, Dr. Castel said, his research shows that it was some of Harris' men who began using the bales on their own—the generals picked up on the idea. Thus, by using the technique of giving only part of the story (his own use of the bales of hemp), Price gave the impression he alone was responsible for the idea.

Confederate General Joseph Shelby, a cavalry leader in the Trans-Mississippi, was Dr. Castel's next subject. Shelby was responsible for holding back the Federals as the Confederates retreated after their defeat at Westport. In his report, Shelby used poetic language to describe the action, making it sound like a glorious battle. In fact, however, according to Federal reports it was merely a skirmish. Shelby thus used the technique of exaggeration and sheer fantasy to falsify the record. Of course, as Castel noted, the report was not even written by Shelby but by his adjutant, a newspaperman named Edwards.

Turning to some Federal generals, Dr. Castel took up the matter of Grant at Shiloh, and specifically whether or not he was surprised there. Grant, although he never wrote an official report on the battle, claimed in his *Memoirs* that he was not surprised. Dr. Castel essentially agrees with those who say Shiloh was a strategical surprise, but not a tactical one. Grant and Sherman (who acted as Grant's deputy in the field) clearly did not anticipate a major attack and scoffed at reports of a large enemy force nearby. However, Grant was correct when he said (as evidence that he was not surprised) that the Union troops formed up and even fired first. But this, Castel said, was primarily due to the terrain. Once the enemy got close tactical surprise simply was not possible and the Union troops were ready for them.

The technique Grant used to stretch the truth, Dr. Castel concluded, was that of setting up straw men and then knocking them down. He maintained that no one ever claimed the Union troops were surprised in their beds—the charge Grant refutes. However, he added, Grant completely ignores the more serious charge that he did not expect an attack and was caught off balance.

Dr. Castel next turned to the Battle of Missionary Ridge and specifically Sherman's failure there. The plan, as he explained, was for Sherman to smash the Confederate right. However, Sherman found unexpectedly rugged terrain and dug in instead of advancing on the few Confederates who opposed him. Then, the next day, although ordered to attack at dawn, Sherman waited until mid-morning before advancing; when he did move he took heavy casualties. At 2 p.m. Grant ordered Thomas forward in the center of the line—his troops charged and broke through.

Sherman thus played a small role in the success at Missionary Ridge. However, in his report he used a great deal of rhetoric to describe what happened and tried to blame, by innuendo and implication, Thomas for the failure of the battle to go as planned.

What Sherman was doing, Castel said, was covering the fact that he failed to accomplish anything himself.

The technique of blaming others and distorting facts was, according to Dr. Castel, practiced often by Confederate General John Bell Hood. He used Peachtree Creek as an example. In his report of that action, and in his memoirs, Hood blamed Hardee for failing to push the attack and his own troops for not being aggressive. However, Union reports said the Confederate infantry charged valiantly, sweeping forward rapidly and striking "like a thunderbolt." Even allowing for exaggeration, Dr. Castel said, it is clear that the Confederates did not fail for lack of trying.

With regard to Hardee's alleged failure, Dr. Castel pointed out that Hood himself had sent Cleburne, who was to assist Hardee, east of Atlanta to fend off Union troops there. Thus, he was not available to Hardee at Peachtree Creek. This fact was never even mentioned by Hood.

But the champion liar and alibier of them all, Dr. Castel said, was Joe Johnston. He, like McClellan, played the numbers game—always claiming he had fewer troops than he did, and that the enemy had more than they did. He also greatly exaggerated enemy losses while downplaying his own. For example, during the Atlanta campaign, he claimed Sherman lost 13 to every one Confederate. He put Confederate losses at 10,000, which, as Dr. Castel noted, would have put Sherman's losses at 130,000—but Sherman only had 100,000 men at the start of the campaign.

In concluding Dr. Castel said we cannot depend on official reports or memoirs for accuracy. But, he added, we should not be too harsh on the Civil War generals since they were only human beings with immense responsibilities. It is thus understandable that they would try to explain away failures and find it difficult to admit mistakes. He noted that even historians, who are supposed to be dedicated to the truth, often exaggerate to bolster their case. Thus, as a historian himself, he cannot condemn the generals who distorted the truth.

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Frances Kolb, a historian from the Boston National Historical Park, has been named to replace Wallace B. Elms as superintendent at Petersburg National Battlefield. Elms, who had been in Petersburg for six years, became superintendent of Valley Forge National Historical Park in June.

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The thieves who made off with more than a dozen cannonballs that were part of the Hagerstown, Maryland, Civil War monument may be in for a surprise. When the town fathers decided to weld the remaining projectiles together to prevent further thefts, they noticed something leaking. It turned out that the projectiles were still loaded with explosive black powder.

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The Lincoln-Grant exhibit, sponsored by the Illinois National Guard and recently displayed in Washington, D.C. in the Heritage Gallery of the National Guard Association, will be featured at the Oak Lawn Historical Society from October 1 through 28, 1981. The Society is located at 9526 South Cook Avenue (5250 west) in Oak Lawn. For further details, call (312) 435-3424.

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A tour of the Boone County Historical Museum and the grave of General Stephen A. Hurlbut, conducted by none other than our own Dr. G. P. Clausius, marked the September meeting of the Salt Creek Civil War Round Table.

# THE NEW BOOKS



(Compiled by Dick Clark)

Bushong, Millard K. *General Turner Ashby and Stonewall's Valley Campaign*. Maps by Timothy T. Pohmer. Verona, Va: McClure Printing Co, 1980. 261 p., maps, illus., bibliog., index. \$15.00

Catton, Bruce. *Reflections on the Civil War*. Edited by John Leekley. Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1981. xxiv, 246 p., illus., index. \$15.95. With an introduction by our E.B. Long.

Dunkelman, Mark H. and Michael J. Winey. *The Hardtack Regiment. An Illustrated History of the 154th Regiment, New York State Infantry Volunteers*. East Brunswick, NJ: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1981. 216 p., illus., bibliog., index. \$19.50

Flood, Charles Bracelen. *Lee—The Last Years*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1981. \$14.95

Frost, Lawrence A. *Custer Legends*. Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green State University, 1981. \$19.95; paper \$9.95

Lee, Richard M. *Mr. Lincoln's City: An Illustrated Guide to the Civil War Sites of Washington*. McLean, Va.: EPM Publications [1981]. \$12.95

Lincoln, Waldo. *History of the Lincoln Family*. An account of the Descendants of Samuel Lincoln of Hingham Massachusetts 1637-1920. Boston: Goodspeed's Book Shop, 1981. \$55.00. Reprint of the 1923 issue.

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

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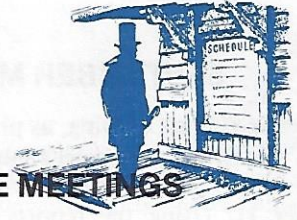
We have learned that Derwent, the Powhatan County, Virginia, post-Civil War sanctuary of Robert E. Lee was sold by the Lee-Jackson Foundation to three local landowners late last fall. According to the Foundation's newsletter, the property was sold substantially below the asking price of \$185,000 because of the new owners' express desire to maintain Derwent's identity as a Lee shrine. The new owners agreed by deed restriction to maintain the facade of the house as it now exists in perpetuity. They also indicated a willingness to transfer the house to the Powhatan Historical Society at such time as the Society can afford it.

Lee resided at Derwent for about 10 weeks in the summer of 1865 before assuming the presidency of Washington College, now Washington and Lee University, in Lexington. The Foundation had cited high operating cost and low tourist volume as the reason for selling the property.

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Although most Southern cities would just as soon forget what the Yankees did when they rolled through 120 years ago, Huntsville, Alabama is spending \$16,000 to keep alive the memory. Specifically, it is trying to preserve graffiti scrawled by Union soldiers on the walls of the Memphis and Charleston Railroad depot. The building, which was built in 1860, is being renovated as a transportation museum and the city has decided to install glass to protect the writings. An example of the graffiti is the name Harris Grover, written in 1864. Under it is the notation, added later, "Harris Grover Co. K 12th Illinois was killed in the battle of 22nd July 1864. He lived in Laporte, Ind. His name shall be remembered by true patriots"

## BULLETIN BOARD



### FUTURE MEETINGS

October 9: Kenneth Hafendorfer on "The Battle of Perryville?"

November 13: Lowell Reidenbaugh on "Jackson at White Oak Swamp?"

December 11: To be announced.

January 8, 1982: William Davis: Subject to be announced.

February 12: To be announced.

March 12: Gordon Whitney on "Spring Hill?"

April 9: To be announced.

May 5-9: Annual Battlefield Tour: Gettysburg.

June 11: Nevins-Freeman Award Dinner and installation of officers. Recipient of award: Frank E. Vandiver.

### BATTLEFIELD PRESERVATION

Petersburg—although nothing is definite yet, a meeting in mid-August among Department of Housing and Urban Development officials, National Park Service Director Russell Dickenson, and Petersburg city officials may have resulted in an end to HUD plans to build another low-income minority housing project on the boundary of the Petersburg National Battlefield. As reported in the May newsletter, opposition to the project centered around the known adverse effects on the park of the existing HUD units (vandalism, fires, etc.). An additional development would have aggravated the situation. A Petersburg realtor, Dama Rice, has been leading the fight against HUD.

Manassas—although Interior Secretary Watt put a moratorium on purchasing additional park land, a certain amount of money has been restored to the budget for this purpose. Unfortunately, there is no guarantee that any of it will be used to purchase the additional land at Manassas which Congress authorized last fall. Members are urged to write their senators urging that Manassas property be included in any Park Service acquisition plans.

Stones River—Congress adjourned last fall without acting on the pending bill to appropriate \$2.5 million to improve access, restore scenery, and expand the boundaries of the park. At last report, the bill had not been reintroduced.

The above information comes from the Civil War Round Table Associates newsletter.

Grant's Tomb—the newsletter of the New York Round Table reports that in April the Department of the Interior issued a memorandum on Grant's Tomb in which it declared its intention to "restore the building and site to the period of 1929-1959; to move the benches at a future time when a site can be found acceptable to the sponsors and adequate funding can be made available; to conserve and very selectively expand a limited collection of General Grant items of notable significance appropriate to this Memorial; and to establish a 24-hour surveillance of the Memorial!"

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Our Registrar, Margaret April, and her daughter Diane, who were injured in a bus accident in California, are reported to be doing well. All the members of The Round Table wish them a continued speedy recovery.