

THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

Volume XLIV, Number 6

Chicago, Illinois

February, 1984

Ralph Newman, Marshall Krolick, William Sullivan, James Vlazny and Gordon Whitney in Senate Confrontation, November-December, 1860

More than 120 years ago, the United States faced the prospect of the dismemberment of the Union, then only 84 years old. The election of Abraham Lincoln, a Northerner and a Republican, as well as an Anti-Slavery advocate, caused the southern states to threaten to secede from the Union, and South Carolina would actually vote such action on December 20, 1860.

In the nation's most deliberative body, the Senate of the United States, some of the most distinguished statesmen in our country's history debated the questions of secession, State's Rights, slavery and sectionalism. At the 428th regular meeting of The Civil War Round Table on February 17 a distinguished panel of our members will attempt to recreate the mood of that critical period in a discussion of these issues. Ralph G. Newman, a founder of the Round Table, will serve as president pro tempore of the Senate. Marshall Krolick will express the views of the 'Radical Northerner'; and Jim Vlazny will provide counterpoint with the views of the 'Radical Southerner'. Balancing the statements of these two members will be Gordon Whitney offering the opinions of the 'Moderate Northerner', while Bill Sullivan expresses the position of the 'Moderate Southerner'.

The general doctrine of the Radical Northerners, as Krolick will express it, can be summarized by the simple, but emotional phrase, "irrepressible conflict." To these Northerners, it was abundantly clear that final strife, political or physical, between the North and the South was unavoidable and once it began, would not end until the philosophy of one faction would be subjugated to that of the other. Since such conflict was inevitable, the Radical Northerners saw no reason to postpone it by agreeing to the current Southern demands in order to temporarily avoid secession. Thus, their position hardened and, in response, so did that of the Southerners.

In his statement, Vlazny will use the arguments of Rhett, Yancey and other fire-eaters to support the right, and indeed the necessity of the Southern states to secede and set up a new government that would protect their inalienable rights. The Radical Southerners defended state sovereignty and argued that under the government formed by the founding fathers, each state retained its sovereignty and freedom to express its independence. From the beginning, in their view, the North attempted to change the government into a consolidated despotism, and, by majority rule,



428th Regular Meeting

Senate Confrontation,
November-December, 1860

Friday, February 17, 1984

Note: This is the third Friday of the month.

Hotel Continental
505 N. Michigan

King Arthur Room, 3rd Floor

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

\$13.00 per person

Entree: Brisket of Beef



to hold the South in subjection.

The 'Moderate Northerner's' viewpoint, as outlined by Whitney, will deal with the importance of the Missouri and Crittenden Compromises as attempts to maintain a balance of power between the North and the South. His remarks will also deal with the animosity engendered by the activities of the Abolitionists centered in New England as they vied against the equally determined Southerners who sought to preserve the institution of slavery through the retention of states rights.

In his appraisal of the 'Moderate Southerner', Sullivan will describe him as one torn by his loyalty to the Union and the Constitution, and his distaste for the threats to

(continued on page 2)

THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE



Founded December 3, 1940

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

Officers

President	Donale E. Anderson
Senior Vice President	J. Robert Ziegler
Vice President	Daniel R. Weinberg
Vice President	Paul I. Klinger
Secretary	Karl Sundstrom
Treasurer	Paul M. Klekner
Assistant Secretary	David G. St. John
Assistant Treasurer	Richard W. McAdoo
Inspector General	Wayne J. Anderson
Commissary General	William J. Sullivan
Aide de Camp	Merlin E. Sumner
Registrar	Margaret H. April
Newsletter Editor	David R. Richert
Assistant Editor	C. Robert Douglas
Contributing Editors	Richard E. Clark Marshall D. Krolick

Founding Newsletter Editor: Gil Twiss, 1954-1968

Board of Trustees

Terms expiring in 1984: Sidney S. Bernstein, Martin P. Dutch, Marvin Goldsher, Leslie MacDonald.

Terms expiring in 1985: J. William Gimbel, William A. Margeson, Patricia K. Sumner, Joseph L. Wisheart.

Committee Chairmen

Battlefield Tour	Patricia K. Sumner Martin P. Dutch
Nevins-Freeman Conference	J. Brooks Davis
Membership	Ward C. Smidl
Hospitality	Margaret H. April
Nominating	Marvin Sanderman
Publications	Glen Wiche
Endowments	Marvin Sanderman
Honorary Awards	J. Brooks Davis
Battlefield Preservation	Edward F. Cosentino
Publicity	Sidney S. Siegel
Research Center	Leslie MacDonald
Members Resource Exchange	Martin P. Dutch
Oral History	Leslie MacDonald
Tape Record Librarian	Joseph L. Wisheart
House	Gene L. T. McCormack
Picnic	Paul Klekner, Bob Dawson

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 60007.



(continued from page 1)

slavery by the Abolitionist movement in the North. The Moderates in the South perceived an ever-widening gulf between themselves and their long-time Democratic allies in the North. To them, Stephen A. Douglas and his popular sovereignty doctrine expressed the true mind of all Northern men. This, they perceived, represented a gradual undermining of the Constitution.

Ralph Newman, founder of the Round Table in 1940, has been active in its activities to this date. An Honorary Award Life Member, he received the Nevins-Freeman award in 1975. As author, co-author or editor of nine books including *The American Iliad*, *The Civil War Digest* and *Lincoln: His Story In His Own Words*, he has received honorary degrees from seven universities. Currently, he serves as a trustee of Lincoln College and president of both the Ulysses S. Grant Association and the Stephen A. Douglas Association. He also serves as a member of the Board of Regents of the Lincoln Academy.

Marshall Krolick has been an active member of The Round Table since 1961 and has served as president, vice-president, treasurer and tour chairman, as well as editor of the Round Table's newsletter for five years. A graduate of Drake University, he received his law degree from Northwestern University in 1962. He is a partner in the Chicago law firm of Deutsch, Levy & Engel, and has served as Assistant State's Attorney of Cook County, Illinois. He speaks regularly on Civil War topics to civic organizations and schools, and has addressed numerous other Round Tables. His talks to our group include "Lee and Longstreet at Gettysburg" and "The Battle of Brandy Station."

William Sullivan has both a Bachelor's and a Master's degree from Northwestern University, and is a certified instructor in history. Currently, he serves as executive director of the Oak Lawn Historical Society, and as President of the Congress of Illinois State Historical Societies and Museums. Bill's service to the Round Table includes two terms as secretary, assistant treasurer, and trustee; he currently is the Commissary General, a post he has held for the past five years. He spoke to the Round Table in January 1976 on "The Civil War on the Great Plains."

A native Chicagoan, James Vlazny received a B.S. degree in Chemistry from Loyola University in 1963 and a Ph.D. in Chemistry from the University of Wisconsin in 1968. After graduation, he served as assistant professor of chemistry at the Virginia Military Institute, Lexington, Virginia, and there developed a strong interest in the Civil War. A member of the Round Table since 1979, he has served as trustee and assistant secretary. A resident of Glenview, he is employed as Licensing Director by Abbott Laboratories.

Gordon Whitney, though born in Grand Rapids, Michigan, has spent most of his life as a resident of Hammond, Indiana. There he served 23 years in the municipal fire department, rising to the rank of senior captain. After retirement in 1974, he purchased a 108 year old farm in the Ohio River country at Madison, Indiana where he raised cattle. He recently assumed the duties of Fire Safety Director for the nuclear power plant at Marble Hill, Indiana. He has served as president of the Chicago and Louisville Round Tables, as well as president of the Hammond Historical Society. Gordon has relatives who served in the 1st Michigan Cavalry and the 22nd Michigan Infantry, and through this heritage, he has become one of the foremost authorities on the Union Army of the Cumberland, where those two units served. He last spoke to the Round Table in March, 1982 on "The Mystery of Spring Hill."

January meeting

The development and use of signalling systems, and particularly the telegraph, in the Civil War was fellow member Myron "Mike" Cohn's topic when he addressed 82 members and guests at The Round Table meeting January 13. In his talk, he gave special emphasis to the man who was largely responsible for developing and implementing the Signal Corps, Albert Meyer.

Mike began by providing some background about signalling itself. He noted that signalling systems of one sort or another have been around a long time, and explained briefly how the flag signalling system works (flag positions indicated numbers; combinations of numbers formed letters). Mike also pointed out that most messages in the Civil War were in cipher—both sides tried to read enemy flag signals and tap telegraph lines.

During the 1850s Meyer, an army surgeon, developed his flag system (he gained interest in it while working with the deaf). In 1856 he wrote to Secretary of War Jefferson Davis to see if the army would be interested in his system—Davis said no. However, in 1857 he did get his proposal presented to the new secretary of war and in 1859 a board of officers recommended experiments. In these experiments Meyer was assisted by E. Porter Alexander. Meyer's system was recommended for adoption in 1860 and he was given the post of chief signal officer with the rank of major. Interestingly, as Mike pointed out, at First Bull Run Alexander was the Confederate signal officer and played a very important role in letting Beauregard know what the Union was up to. In fact, Mike feels that without the Confederate signal corps the outcome of the battle might have been different.

Although it was called the military telegraph, the telegraph system throughout the Civil War was in civilian hands, and the operators were all civilians—primarily teenage boys. The system was under the command of Anson Stager, a Western Union official who was commissioned a colonel. Meyer, however, developed a tactical field telegraph system, independent of the military telegraph. To make up for his lack of skilled operators a pointer device was developed, but it worked poorly—the sending and receiving machines often did not synchronize and it was slow.

Realizing that he needed skilled operators, Meyer began advertising for them. Stager complained to Secretary of War Stanton that Meyer would be stealing his people and Stanton relieved Meyer of command. However, after the war he was reappointed chief signal officer and was given command of the military telegraph as well. (Mike noted that in contrast to the divided Union communication system, the Confederates had a much more comprehensive organization all under single control.)

After the war men who had served as telegraphers organized and sought recognition as combatants. Despite the fact that they were in constant danger (about 100 telegraphers were killed) and performed a great service for the army in fostering communication, Congress never approved combatant status. Thus, they were never able to receive government benefits or pensions. (Mike gave several examples of the importance of the signal corps and telegraphers. At Gettysburg, a Union signal officer on Little Round Top summoned help when that key position was being threatened by the Confederates. At Chickamauga telegraphers kept Washington in immediate touch with the fighting, continuing to send messages while retreating with the Union forces.)

"The Sitting Lincoln", located in Grant Park just across Columbus Drive from Buckingham Fountain, is considered by many to be sculptor Augustus Saint-Gaudens finest work. But, as reported in an article in the *Chicago Tribune* in November, the monument is in a seriously deteriorated condition. The face and form of the president are black instead of green, the identifying plaque is missing, the stones around the base of the pedestal are coming loose, and the foundation under the monument is badly eroded.

According to E.V. Buchsbaum, a consulting architect for the Chicago Park District, it would cost \$100,000 to repair the monument. Unfortunately no funds are available. Buchsbaum said that if the work is allowed to deteriorate much further the cost of restoration will increase dramatically, or the monument might have to be razed. What is needed, he added, is "for some angel or angels to come forward and volunteer the funds required to refurbish the monument." The monument was created by Saint-Gaudens in 1907.

Malcolm Forbes, publisher of Forbes Magazine, recently purchased the last letter that Abraham Lincoln wrote to his wife. According to the Milwaukee Round Table newsletter, the price was \$48,000. The letter was sent from Grant's headquarters at City Point on April 2, 1865, 12 days before the assassination.

Battle of Westport preservation

Fellow member Lumir Buresh of the Kansas City Round Table has sent the following letter:

"I believe you will be interested in some new battlefield preservation developments in Kansas City. The heaviest fighting in The Battle of Westport took place at the Big Blue River at the Byrams Crossing. This two day part of the three day battle of Westport is called The Battle of The Big Blue. The Battle of Westport Fund Inc. is developing The Big Blue Battlefield Park at the site of the battle.

"The battlefield, for the most part, is located in an open industrial park with a large amount of vacant land. The Monnett Fund has been donated 42.8 acres of the battlefield land with an appraised value of \$350,000. We expect to receive four to six additional tracts in the near future. The City of Kansas City and The Kansas City Parks and Recreation Department own all the land adjacent to one side of the River. We hope to acquire all land adjacent to the other side of the River. As the land is acquired it will be developed by the Monnett Fund and then turned over to the Parks and Recreation Department for operation and maintenance.

"The site will include the defensive line, the cliff, trenches, a key ravine, the configuration of the River and Byrams Ford and a part of the old Byrams Ford Road both of which still exist. The Kansas City Landmarks Commission is working with us to place the site on the National Register of Historic Places. Also six additional markers have been placed in Independence to increase our coordinated self guided tour of the Battle of Westport to 31 markers. Guided tours are also conducted."

A concert of Civil War music will be presented by the 1st Brigade Band of Milwaukee on April 14 from 2-5 p.m. at the Chicago Public Library Cultural Center. Tickets, \$4 for adults and \$2 for children, will be available at the February, March and April meetings or at the Abraham Lincoln Book Shop. They will not be available at the door.

THE NEW BOOKS



(compiled by Dick Clark)

Broadfoot, Tom and Marianne Pair and Roger Hunt. *Civil War Books: A Priced Checklist*. Second Edition, Wendell, NC: Broadfoot Publishing Co., 1983. 338 p. \$25.00
Coggins, Jack. *Arms and Equipment of the Civil War*. New York: Fairfax Press, 1983. Original of 1962 with Doubleday.

Commager, Henry Steele, ed. *The Blue and the Gray. The Story of the Civil War as Told by Participants*. New York: Fairfax Press, 1982. Original of 1950. \$9.98.

Confederate Receipt Book. A Compilation of over One Hundred receipts, adapted to the Times. Introduction by E. Merton Coulter. Mattituck, NY: Amereon Ltd., 1983. Plastic bound. \$7.95. Original of 1863.

Crowe, Vernon H. *Storm in the Mountains. Thomas' Legion of Cherokees and Mountaineers*. Cherokee, NC: Museum of the Cherokee Indian. 1983. \$14.95.

Field, Phyllis F. *The Politics of Race in New York: The Struggle for Black Suffrage in the Civil War Era*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982. 264 p. \$19.50.

Germans for a Free Missouri: Translations from the St. Louis Radical Press, 1857-1862. Selected and translated by Steven Rowan; with an introduction and commentary by James Neal Primm. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1983. \$24.00.

Hazlett, James C., Edwin Olmstead, M. Hume Parks. *Field Artillery Weapons of the Civil War*. With a foreword by Harold L. Peterson. Newark: University of Delaware Press, c1982. 480 p., illus. \$30.00.

Lewis, John Henry. *Recollections from 1860 to 1865*. With incidents of camp life, descriptions of battles, the life of the southern soldier, his hardships and sufferings, and the life of a prisoner of war in the northern prisons. Dayton, Ohio: Morningside Bookshop, 1893. \$12.50; paper \$7.50. Original from 1895. 9th Virginia Infantry.

Lowry, Terry. *The Battle of Scary Creek: Military Operations in the Kanawha Valley, April-July 1861*. Charleston, W.Va.: Pictorial Histories Publ. Co., [1982]. 178 p. \$7.95.

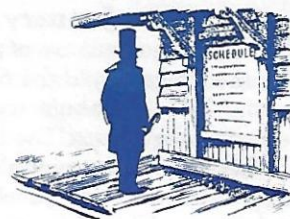
Manigault, Arthur Middleton. *A Carolinian Goes to War: The Civil War Narrative of Arthur Middleton Manigault, Brigadier-General, C.S.A.* Edited by R. Lockwood Tower; with a foreword by Thomas L. Connelly. And with his Mexican War Narrative, edited by Warren Ripley and Arthur M. Wilcox. Published for the Charleston Library Society. Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1983. \$24.95.

McDonough, James Lee and Thomas L. Connelly. *Five Tragic Hours. The Battle of Franklin*. Knoxville, University of Tennessee Press, 1983. 217 p. \$17.50.

Michigan, Adjutant General. *Record First Michigan Infantry, Civil War, 1861-1865*. Detroit: John King, 1983. 151 p. \$12.95. Reprint of 1905 issue. King hopes to reissue all 46 vols. plus the index vol.

Michigan, Adjutant General. *Record Second Michigan Infantry, Civil War, 1861-1865*. Detroit: John K. King, 1983. 189 p. \$12.95.

BULLETIN BOARD



Future meetings

Regular meetings are held at the Hotel Continental, 505 N. Michigan, the second Friday in each month, except as noted.

February 17: Marshall Krolick, Bill Sullivan, Jim Vlazny and Gordon Whitney in "Senate Confrontation, November-December, 1860" with Ralph Newman as Pres. Pro. Tem. **Note:** This is the third Friday of the month.

March 9: Col. Roy K. Flint on "Cold Harbor."

April 13: Richard McMurry on "John Bell Hood."

May 2-6: Battlefield Tour to Washington, D.C.

May 18: Walter N. Trenerry on "John Pope." **Note:** This is the third Friday of the month.

June 8: Dan Jordan on "John S. Mosby."

July 29: Picnic

New member

David J. Lynam, 2012 N. Cleveland Avenue, Chicago, Illinois 60614.

A group of New Mexico residents are trying to raise \$5,000 to save Pigeon Ranch, a three-room adobe building that figured prominently in the Civil War Battle of Glorieta. The ranch house was alternately used by Union and Confederate forces as a hospital during the 1862 battle, which is sometimes known as the "Gettysburg of the West." The battle was a turning point in the west since the Confederate forces were forced to flee south down the Rio Grande Valley. Contributions can be sent to: Pigeon's Ranch Preservation Committee, P.O. Box 5819, Sante Fe, New Mexico 87502.

According to an item in the Lynchburg Round Table newsletter, a Confederate chaplain has been awarded the Confederate Medal of Honor by the S.C.V. The chaplain, Emmeran Bliemel, a Benedictine, served with the 10th Tennessee until he was killed during the Battle of Jonesboro while pronouncing words of absolution over a dying officer. The medal was awarded in a ceremony on the grounds of the Clayton County Courthouse in Jonesboro, Georgia.

The National Underwater and Marine Agency, a private organization, has found what it believes to be the resting place of a Civil War steamer that sank in the Mississippi River in April, 1865, reportedly with \$18,000 in gold aboard and with a loss of more than 1,500 lives. The Sultana sank on a trip from Vicksburg to Cairo. On board were more than 2,200 passengers, most of them Union soldiers just out of prison. The 1,000-ton steamer was about nine miles upstream from Memphis, at what is now Mound City, Arkansas, when three of her four boilers exploded. The steamer is now buried in a soybean field northwest of Mound City. Shifts in the river's course have left wrecks buried in silt far from the river's present bed.