



THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

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September 1992

Wiley Sword on "Who Speaks for the Dead? A Perspective on Franklin and Nashville"

by Barbara Hughett

Some of the bloodiest fighting of the Civil War took place in Tennessee, during the battles at Franklin (November 30, 1864) and Nashville (December 15-16, 1864). At Franklin, five Confederate generals were killed, six wounded (one mortally), and one captured. And thousands of ordinary soldiers on both sides were killed and wounded during both these conflicts in the last few months of the war. The previous summer, in a desperate attempt to change the rapidly ebbing fortunes of the Confederacy, President Jefferson Davis had replaced General Joseph E. Johnston as commander of the Western armies with the dashing Texan, John Bell Hood.



Wiley Sword

Hood had caught everyone's attention with his reckless daring and bravery during earlier battles. He lost the use of his left arm at Gettysburg and his left leg at Chickamauga, but this did not dampen his ardor for combat. Strapped to his saddle, Hood led the Army of Tennessee in a series of disastrous but gallant offensives. He believed in frontal assaults, in the credo of attack and overwhelm, and he confronted Sherman's forces aggressively, suffering heavy losses without positive results. Instead of pursuing and harassing Sherman after the fall of Atlanta, Hood—with Richmond's approval—launched an invasion of Tennessee, hoping to draw Sherman back to protect Nashville and the Union heartland.

Hood's defeat at Nashville proved to be the worst suffered by any army during the entire war. Southern valor could not offset the overwhelming numerical advantage of the Northern forces, their greater resources, or badly-flawed Southern leadership. The virtual destruction of Hood's army proved to be the death knell of the Confederacy.

"Who Speaks for the Dead? A Perspective on Franklin and Nashville" will be the topic of Wiley Sword when he addresses The Round Table on September 11. He will tell the story of Franklin and Nashville from the perspective of the individual soldiers who fought in those battles. He will talk in detail about these men, their personal lives, their attitudes, and the commitments they made.

Wiley Sword is a businessman, historian, author, and authority on antique weapons. A graduate of the University



513th Regular Meeting

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Wiley Sword on "Who Speaks for the Dead? A Perspective on Franklin and Nashville"

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Friday, September 11

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

Cocktails at 5:30 p.m. Dinner at 6:30 p.m.
\$20.00 per person

Menu: Boneless Chicken Breast with Porcini
Mushroom Sauce, Orange Roughy, or Fruit Plate



A Reminder

Please make your reservation by Wednesday, September 9. Mail the enclosed postcard or call the book shop at (312) 944-3085.

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.

of Michigan, he has successfully operated a manufacturer's representative agency of automotive lines for the past thirty years. He has resided in the suburban Detroit area for most of his life.

Sword's interest in the Civil War began with the stories he heard as a child about his great-grandfathers' experiences in the Civil war—one was a Confederate captain, the other a Union soldier. He is the author of five books and numerous scholarly articles. His books include *Shiloh: Bloody April* (1974) and *Embrace an Angry Wind: The Confederacy's Last Hurrah* (1992). Wiley last addressed The Round Table during the 1991 battlefield tour to Shiloh.

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.

The Eighteenth Annual National Congress of Civil War Round Tables will be held in Lexington, Kentucky, on October 1-4. The principal speaker will be Edwin C. Bearss. A conference on "The Civil War in the Indiana Territory" is scheduled for October 24-25 in Fort Smith Arkansas. Speakers will include Leroy Fischer and James Caster. For information on both events, call Jerry Russell at (501) 225-3996.

BATTLEFIELD PRESERVATION

☆ UPDATE ☆

by David Richert

The state of Kentucky has awarded \$2.5 million in federal highway money to fund preservation projects at Perryville Battlefield State Historic Site in Perryville, Kentucky. The money represents 80 percent of a package created in a partnership using government funding and money raised privately. It will come through the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet after another \$625,000 in matching money is raised, making a total of \$3.125 million available for preservation projects.

According to Kentucky Transportation Cabinet Secretary Don Kelly, the money comes from a federal transportation enhancement program "included in the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991, which officially recognizes that highways and transit facilities should blend with and enhance natural, social, and cultural environments."

Kentucky Governor Brereton Jones, in announcing the award in June, said the money is part of about \$10 million in enhancement funds designated for Kentucky. He added that this is the first time funds from the enhancement program have been committed for use with a historic preservation project.

David Morgan, the state's historic preservation officer and the executive director of the Kentucky Heritage Council, said that organization will work in cooperation with several other groups to raise the remaining \$625,000. Among those groups are the Perryville Battlefield Preservation Association, chaired by Kent Masterson Brown.

According to Brown, the money might be used for such things as adding to the 99-acre park and buying easements that would prevent landowners from developing parts of the 3500-acre battlefield that surrounds the park. Some of the money could be used for additional markers, fencing, and artillery pieces as well as for reconstruction of the Russell House, which stood during the battle.

Perryville was one of two Kentucky battlefields named by Secretary of the Interior Manuel Lujan Jr. as among the top twenty-five most significant and endangered battlefields in the nation.

The Association for the Preservation of Civil War Sites recently purchased the Rich Mountain Battlefield, one of West Virginia's most important Civil War sites. The APCWS paid \$26,000 for the forty-acre parcel, which represents virtually the entire combat area of the battlefield. The site includes the original Staunton-Parkersburg Turnpike through Buckhannon Pass, the remnants of the Hart House and its outbuildings, and a modern battlefield monument and historical marker. The site's most interesting features are rock outcroppings in which soldiers' names are etched and are still plainly legible.

The fighting at Rich Mountain resulted from Union efforts in 1861 to secure western Virginia and to protect the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad. As a result of the battle, Unionists gained control of northwestern Virginia and George B. McClellan was launched into the national limelight. The Rich Mountain Battlefield Foundation brought the opportunity to save the battlefield to the attention of the APCWS. The Foundation will manage the site and erect interpretive signs and publish a brochure for visitors.

☞ JUNE MEETING ☞

by Barbara Hughett

"A battle of strange errors"—this was Douglas Southall Freeman's terminology in describing the Battle of Seven Pines (May 31-June 1, 1862). As an artillery shell struck Confederate General Joseph E. Johnston in the chest and he was carried off the Seven Pines battlefield, there was gathered in the immediate area an impressive array of notables from Richmond. Those in attendance included Confederate President Jefferson Davis, General Robert E. Lee, Texas Senator Louis T. Wigfall, and John Daniel, editor of the *Richmond Examiner*.

It was to Wigfall's home that Johnston was taken to convalesce. During his recuperation there, two things began to be born: one—a Confederate opposition party would be stillborn; the second—that "strange, dark thing that happened in the mind of Joseph E. Johnston—would last much longer and have a profound effect on the military fate of the Confederacy." "Joseph E. Johnston: Politics, Ego, and Rationalization after the Battle of Seven Pines" was the topic of historian Steven H. Newton on June 12, when he spoke before 109 members and guests at the 512th regular meeting of The Civil War Round Table.

Early in the battle, Johnston—a man of great ego and pride—had been unable to impress his will upon General James Longstreet, who careened down the Williamsburg Road in total contravention of Johnston's orders. When the attack did not go as planned, Johnston vacillated, at one point saying, "I wish all the troops were back in their camps. I should call the whole thing off." However, when Davis, Lee, and other eminent leaders showed up, he couldn't very well "call the whole thing off." While frantically dashing about the field, he was seriously wounded. Command of the army, was given to Lee.

"He awakens the next day," Newton said, "to discover that he is a hero. Joseph E. Johnston discovers that he has somehow fought the battle that saved Richmond, that he has struck a mighty blow and staggered the Union Army in their tracks, and that he has been lionized ... he almost annihilated the Federal corps—and would have, had he not been shot ... he is compared to Albert Sidney Johnston at Shiloh ..." and to Napoleon by the *Richmond Examiner*. General Benjamin Huger is made the scapegoat for any failings in the battle.

While recovering from his wounds, Johnston was courted by opponents of Jefferson Davis and encouraged to become the figurehead for a true opposition political party in the Confederacy. Those who were promoting this cause included Wigfall, Daniel of the *Examiner*, former Virginia Governor John Floyd, Tennessee Congressman Henry S. Foote, and Alabama fire-eater William L. Yancey. By late August, the *Examiner* was running editorials critical of Lee and laudatory of Johnston. However, the only thing Johnston really wanted was to be returned to the head of the Army of Northern Virginia. And this was something his friends could not deliver; a general who was being as successful as Lee was at this point in time was in no danger of being supplanted.

Though Davis was aware of these maneuverings against him, he believed he needed Johnston in the war. The president realized "that if Joseph E. Johnston was not in Virginia, near the center of Confederate power, this whole mixture of strange collaborators would fade away

into their own separate directions."

In November 1862, Davis offered Johnston command of the "superdepartment" in the Ohio Valley, which controlled all Confederate troops between the Mississippi River and the Appalachian Mountains. Johnston reluctantly accepted and was "banished to the West." While this was the largest command offered to any Confederate general during the course of the war, it placed Johnston far away from the base of political power. Davis, of course, realized that Johnston's acceptance of this command would most certainly end the formation of the political party that had been about to be born.

Newton called Joseph E. Johnston's military career, pre- and post-Seven Pines, "a story of missed opportunities, of battles not fought, and positions almost held." In closing, he observed that: "Johnston had a fear not of death, not of wounding, but a fear of not knowing how to control the uncontrollable. He never learned because he never got to get back on that horse and ride again until he had all the inner demons against him.

"Lee never controlled it; Grant never controlled it; Sherman never controlled it; Jackson never controlled it. They swam with it; they rode with it; they tried to survive it. Johnston never understood that the only mistake was not going back to make more mistakes. And so he pursued his 'perfect record.' He never caught on."

Battlefield Tour Date Change

Due to circumstances beyond our control, the dates for the 1993 battlefield tour to Vicksburg have been moved forward one week. The new dates are May 6-9. A pre-tour to Port Hudson, Louisiana, is being planned by Marv Sanderman, for May 4-5. Please mark your calendars accordingly.

Stephen B. Oates to Receive 1993 Nevins-Freeman Award

The Executive Committee of The Civil War Round Table, at its July 18 meeting, voted to bestow its 1993 Nevins-Freeman Award on scholar and author Stephen B. Oates. Paul Murray Kendall Professor of Biography at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, Oates has written several highly-acclaimed books on topics relating to the Civil War era. Included among his published works are *Malice Toward None: The Life of Abraham Lincoln* (1977) and *To Purge This Land With Blood: A Biography of John Brown* (1970). He will deliver his acceptance address at the October 8, 1993, meeting.

The Seventh Annual Lincoln Colloquium, of which the Lincoln Home National Historic Site is the principal sponsor, will take place on Saturday, October 24, from 11:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m., at Sangamon State University in Springfield. This year's theme is "Abraham Lincoln and the Political Process." Speakers will include John Y. Simon, William E. Gienapp, and Cullom Davis. The registration fee, which includes a luncheon, is \$25.00. Checks should be made payable to the Eastern National Monument Association, with "colloquium" written on the memo line of the check, and sent to: Lincoln Colloquium, Lincoln Home National Historic Site, 413 South Eighth Street, Springfield, Illinois 62701-1905.

