

THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

Volume LIII, Number 2

Chicago, Illinois

October 1992

Nevins-Freeman Address Shelby Foote on "The Novelist as Historian"

by Barbara Hughett

The Nevins-Freeman Award, named in honor of distinguished historians Allan Nevins and Douglas Southall Freeman, was established by The Civil War Round Table in 1974. It is conferred each year to recognize individuals for their contributions to the preservation of our nation's heritage and to our understanding of the past, especially the years 1861-1865. On October 9, novelist and historian Shelby Foote will become the nineteenth annual recipient of The Nevins-Freeman Award. The topic of his acceptance address will be "The Novelist as Historian."


Millions of Americans "discovered" Shelby Foote in September 1990 when he appeared as a commentator on the very successful public television documentary series, "The Civil War," produced by Ken Burns. With subsequent re-runnings of the series, Foote's popularity has increased and he has become somewhat of a "cult hero." *Newsweek* magazine compared his luxuriant Mississippi drawl to "molasses over hominy." His vast store of knowledge and seemingly endless anecdotes about the war charmed viewers and helped create a new surge of interest in the American Civil War.



Shelby Foote

While he is best known for his monumental and highly-acclaimed three-volume *The Civil War: A Narrative* (1958-1974), Foote considers himself primarily a novelist. His novels include *Tournament* (1949), *Love in a Dry Season* (1951), *Shiloh* (1952), and *Jordan County* (1964). Retitled "Memphis," his 1978 novel *September, September* became a 1991 made-for-television movie on the Turner Television Network. He is currently at work on a character study set in the Mississippi Delta in 1948, with flashbacks to the Reconstruction era and flash-forwards to the early 1960s.

A resident of Memphis for many years, Foote is a native of Greenville, Mississippi, and has been interested in Civil War history since childhood. His great-grandfather, Captain Hezekiah William Foote, fought for the Confederacy at Shiloh. Shelby Foote attended the University of North Carolina, and served in the U.S. Army (1940-44) and the U.S. Marine Corps (1944-45). Included among his awards and honors are three Guggenheim fellowships, a



514th Regular Meeting


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Nevins-Freeman Address
Shelby Foote on "The Novelist as Historian"

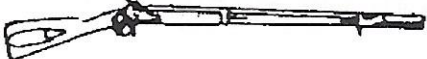
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Friday, October 9

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Holiday Inn Mart Plaza
350 North Orleans Street
 **The Sauganash Ballroom**
14th Floor

Cocktails at 5:30 p.m. Dinner at 6:30 p.m.
\$20.00 per person
Entrée: Baron of Beef Bordelaise,
Orange Roughy, or Fruit Plate



A Reminder

Please make your reservation by Wednesday, October 7. Mail the enclosed postcard or call the book shop at (312) 944-3085. **NO WALK-INS, PLEASE!**

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.

Ford Foundation grant, and the 1964 Fletcher Pratt Award.

The Civil War: A Narrative has drawn some criticism for allegedly sacrificing scholarship to readability. "Professional historians," Foote told the *Washington Post* in October 1990, "think good writing interferes with history, and they're very wrong about that. It's the reason people don't read history."

This will be Shelby Foote's fourth address to The Civil War Round Table. He spoke about Ulysses S. Grant in 1963 and 1968. His most recent appearance was in December 1974, when his topic was "Writing Civil War History."

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.



Harold Holzer has recently been named to the post of chief communications officer at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. Holzer, an authority on Lincoln and Civil War iconography, addressed The Round Table in March 1988. Holzer and his frequent co-author Mark E. Neely, Jr., spoke on "The Confederate Image: Prints of the Lost Cause." Holzer was previously a communications advisor to New York Governor Mario Cuomo.

BATTLEFIELD PRESERVATION

☆ UPDATE ☆

by David Richert

The National Park Service has approved a general management plan for Antietam National Battlefield. The plan provides for restoration of the battlefield landscape to its approximate appearance on the eve of the battle of September 17, 1862. Restoration actions are in keeping with the 1960 legislative mandate "to provide for the maintenance of the site...in, or its restoration to, substantially the condition in which it was at the time of the battle: (Public Law 86-438)."

The plan calls for simplifying the automobile tour route so that it focuses on the three main battle phases, incorporating new interpretive features and media to enhance visitor experiences, and cooperating with state, local, and private entities to ensure preservation of the rural/agricultural landscape inside and adjacent to the battlefield. Restoration actions will return the landscape to a more historic appearance by reestablishing many of the farm fields, woods, orchards, fence lines, and historic trace roads that existed in 1862, and restoring the exteriors of several historic farmhouses.

Four roads from the 1890s commemorative period will be removed, and other 1890s roads will be restored to their 1862 condition. Some new developments (roads, parking areas, and interpretive features) will be introduced into the historic landscape, but they will be designed and sited to minimize their intrusion upon the scene. Some modern structures will be removed.

The Park Service's Record of Decision states that the plan's elements are considered technically and economically feasible and represent a sound balance between protecting resources, providing a suitable visitor experience, and cooperation with state, local, and private entities. In addition, all practicable means will be taken to avoid or minimize environmental harm or harm to cultural and archeological resources.

Discussion of various management plans for Antietam was begun in 1989. The plan adopted, known as Alternative B, received the support of The Civil War Round Table in May of 1991; a letter stating that support was sent to the Superintendent of the Antietam National Battlefield, Richard Rambur. For a further discussion of the plan for Antietam and the other alternatives, see Mary Munsell Abroe's Battlefield Preservation Report in the June 1991 issue of this newsletter.

A man charged with receiving stolen property from the Vicksburg National Military Park has been convicted and sentenced to five years in prison. The offender was charged with possessing turn-of-the-century bronze markers that had been stolen from the park. They were recovered at his scrap yard; one had been cut in half. The two men who stole the plaques pleaded guilty and are awaiting sentencing. The plaques marked the locations of troops headed by Generals John Stevenson and John A. Logan.

According to Park Ranger Tim Mauch, the conviction and sentence sends a clear message that cases of park property theft will be prosecuted. "It's our heritage," he said. "It's everybody's."

The above item was brought to our attention by Vicksburg National Military Park historian Terry Winschel, who will be one of our guides on our tour there next spring.

SEPTEMBER MEETING

by Barbara Hughett

Survivors of the Battle of Franklin (November 30, 1864) said that the personal terror they had faced there, and the enormous futility of that contest, could never be fully explained. Some of the bloodiest fighting of the Civil War took place at Franklin, and at Nashville on December 15-16; thousands of men gave their lives in these battles. Yet these conflicts are little-known to the general public, having been relegated to the "composte pile" of history. "Who Speaks for the Dead? A Perspective on Franklin and Nashville" was the topic of historian and author Wiley Sword on September 11, when he spoke before 128 members and guests at the 513th regular meeting of The Civil War Round Table.

Sword called the 1864 invasion of Tennessee "a bold attempt by the South to change the course of the war... to deplete the will of the Northern populace in supporting an exceedingly costly and burdensome war." Confederate planners hoped that the mounting casualties and continuing financial drain might heighten possibilities for a negotiated settlement. Leading the invasion was General John Bell Hood, who had replaced Joseph E. Johnston as commander of the western armies during the previous summer.

A dashing Texan whose trademark was an aggressive head-on style of behavior, 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 right leg was amputated after his wounding at Chickamauga, but this did not dampen his ardor for combat. Strapped to his saddle, he led the Army of Tennessee in a series of disastrous but gallant offensives.

Hood's loss of Atlanta the previous August had seriously damaged his reputation and brought some angry demands for his removal. His close friendship with Confederate President Jefferson Davis had been influential in saving his position, and the bold invasion of mid-Tennessee was undertaken with Davis's full approval.

The Southerners were no match for the Union forces under Generals George H. Thomas and John Schofield. At Franklin, Patrick Cleburne, "perhaps the finest infantry general in the Army of Tennessee" was made to lead a suicidal frontal attack across two miles of open ground. To his officers who questioned the wisdom of such a move, Cleburne replied, "If we are to die, let us die like men." Cleburne was killed in that attack.

Near the end of the battle, thousands of dead and dying littered the open ground between two barricaded lines. Screams of agony and cries of help went unheeded; there was no way to safely get to the men. "If there ever was a hell on earth," Sword observed, "it must have been in those terrible ditches at Franklin. One soldier remembered he was ravishingly thirsty, yet when he attempted to drink from the water found lying in the ditch, it tasted like blood—the blood of his comrades. He spit it out." Finally, as darkness came some were able to crawl away from the hideous carnage.

After five hours of vicious fighting, the Federal ranks were withdrawn in the middle of the night to Nashville. Schofield had decided not to risk further combat. This retreat from Franklin, though, "belied the results. It had been one of the most stunning defeats ever endured by any Confederate army."

When Hood's bedraggled troops got to Nashville, they

were severely defeated by Thomas's reinforced army. The Battle of Nashville, Sword said, proved to be the most decisive of the entire war. Ultimately, the consequences of Franklin and Nashville led to the defeat of the Confederacy. "In fact," Sword remarked, "if the surprise attack at Shiloh was the Pearl Harbor of the American Civil War, the encounters at Franklin and Nashville may well represent a World War II equivalent of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. As surely as the nuclear devastation of these two cities led to the ultimate surrender of Japan, the destruction of the Army of Tennessee at Franklin and Nashville became a major basis for the demise of the Southern Confederacy."

In closing, Sword returned to the title of his address. "To answer that rhetorical question—'Who speaks for the dead?'—I would suggest that we all do. By our thoughts and deeds, by our words and actions, we express our wisdom or ignorance of what has gone before. If the bottom line of knowing about our history is an attitude, an attitude which daily influences our perceptions and judgments, we can take pride that we as individuals have not forsaken the past or the future.

"Indeed, as the lessons of the Civil War have well demonstrated, may we never forget that in knowing well the bloody and painful lessons of the past lies the greatest hope of preserving a favorable and peaceful future. And that, my fellow historians, is a just cause for us all."

Previous Nevins-Freeman Honorees

Bruce Catton, 1974	John Hope Franklin, 1983
Ralph G. Newman, 1975	Richard B. Harwell, 1984
T. Harry Williams, 1976	John Y. Simon, 1985
Lloyd D. Miller, 1977	Harold M. Hyman, 1986
Bell I. Wiley, 1978	James T. Hickey, 1987
E.B. Long, 1979	Robert K. Krick, 1988
Edwin C. Bearss, 1980	Mark E. Neely, Jr., 1989
James I. Robertson, Jr., 1981	Marshall D. Krolick, 1990
Frank E. Vandiver, 1982	Gary W. Gallagher, 1991

Brooks Davis Leads Civil War/Lincoln Course

Former President Brooks Davis will be the coordinator for a fall/spring study group at Northwestern University, downtown campus, for the Institute of Learning and Retirement. Classes, which will meet 339 East Chicago Avenue, begin on Tuesday, October 6, at 1:30 p.m. Registrants may take as many as fifteen courses during the two semesters at a total cost of \$250. The study will use James M. McPherson's *Battle Cry of Freedom* as a guide and local site visits will be included. For additional information, contact Brooks at (312) 944-5082.

Books are needed for the raffle held at each monthly meeting. The proceeds are donated to the cause of battlefield preservation. Please bring any books you may be able to contribute for use in the raffles to Ted Birndorf, chairman of the Battlefield Preservation Committee.

A Message From The President

As is his custom at speaking engagements, due to time constraints, Shelby Foote will sign no books nor autographs. Thank you for your cooperation.

Mary Abroe

The New Books

Compiled by C. Robert Douglas



- Mudd, Joseph A. *With Porter in North Missouri: A Chapter in the History of the War Between the States*. Press of the Camp Pope Bookshop, P.O. Box 2232, Iowa City, IA 52244. \$30.00. Original of 1909.
- Mulholland, St. Clair A. *The Story of the 116th Regiment Pennsylvania Infantry*. Olde Soldier Books. 1991. \$35.00. Original of 1899.
- Osborne, Seward R., ed. *The Civil War Diaries of Col. Theodore B. Gates. Twentieth New York State Militia*. Longstreet House. 1992. \$20.00.
- Phillips, Donald T. *Lincoln on Leadership: Executive Strategies For Tough Times*. Warner Books. 1992. \$17.95.
- Stephens, Robert Grier, Jr. *Intrepid Warrior: Clement Anselm Evans, Confederate General From Georgia: Life, Letters and Diaries of the War Years*. Morningside Press. 1992. \$35.00.
- Stephenson, William H. *The Political Life of General James H. Lane*. Kansas Heritage Press. 1991. \$17.95. Original of 1930.
- Stockdale, Paul H. *The Death of an Army: The Battle of Nashville and Hood's Retreat*. Southern Heritage Press, P.O. Box 1615, Murfreesboro, TN 37130. 1991. \$17.95.
- Sword, Wiley. *Embrace an Angry Wind: The South's Last Hurrah—Spring Hill, Franklin and Nashville*. Harper. 1992. \$30.00.
- Symonds, Craig L. *Gettysburg: A Battle Atlas*. Nautical & Aviation Publ. Co. 1992. \$19.95.
- Vetter, Charles E. *Sherman: Merchant of Terror, Advocate of Peace*. Pelican Publ. Co. 1992. \$25.00.

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"Black Easter: The Assassination of Abraham Lincoln," a video-documentary, written by William Hanchett and produced and directed by Gary L. Beebe, was recently released by White River Pictures. Hanchett, professor emeritus of history at San Diego State University and the author of *The Lincoln Murder Conspiracies* (1983), addressed The Round Table in February 1988, on "Abraham Lincoln: Man in the Middle." For further information or to order a videotape, call White River Pictures at 1-800-289-6682.

The history of The Round Table, *The 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.

Schimmelfennig Boutique

In addition to The Round Table history, the following items are available at each monthly meeting:

Lapel pins \$3.00 each, two for \$5.00

Mugs \$2.00 each, two for \$3.00

Meeting tapes \$7.00 each

Civil War Buff posters \$10. each

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 Holiday Inn Mart Plaza, 350 North Orleans Street (Buttons, 15th Floor), the second Friday in each month, except as noted.
- October 9:* Shelby Foote, Nevins-Freeman Address.
- November 13:* John Hennessy on "Second Manassas: Fresh Perspectives."
- December 11:* Peter Cozzens on "The Real Rock of Chickamauga: The Twenty-first Ohio on Horseshoe Ridge."
- January 8:* Brooks Davis on "Jefferson Davis and Abraham Lincoln as Commanders in Chief."
- February 12:* Brian Pohanka on "Digging into Custer's Last Stand: New Perspectives on the Little Big Horn."
- March 12:* Frank Byrne on "Civil War Prisons: Myths and Realities."
- April 16:* Frances Kennedy on "Community Benefits of Battlefield Preservation" (Please note: this is the **third** Friday of the month.)
- May 6-9:* Annual Battlefield Tour—Vicksburg.
- May 14:* William Piston on "Clio and the General: James Longstreet and the Writing of Southern History."
- June 11:* Carol Reardon on "The Image of Pickett's Charge in American History."

New Members

- Steve Antosiac, 1290 Dogwood Lane, Carol Stream, IL 60188, (708) 231-7184
- Troy Denkinger, 6436 N. Leavitt, #2-W, Chicago, IL 60645, (312) 761-6081
- Dr. M. Drucker, 16020 W. Prestwick, Miami Lakes, FL 33014, (305) 823-8274
- Thomas J. Herres, 4052 N. Avers, Chicago, IL 60612, (312) 588-3094
- Marc S. Kunis, 7985 Santa Monica, Suite 109-251, West Hollywood, CA 90046
- Walter M. Miles, 3100 Lexington Lane, Glenview, IL 60025, (708) 205-0475

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President Mary Abroe will address the Twin Cities Civil War Round Table in Minneapolis on October 20. Her topic will be "Initial Battlefield Preservation Efforts in the Nineteenth Century."

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Member Alvin Robert Kantor is the co-author, with Marjorie Sered Kantor, of the recently-published *Sanitary Fairs: A Philatelic and Historical Study of Civil War Benevolences*. The hardbound book is nearly 300 pages in length, and contains more than 400 photographs. To order a copy, send \$75 to SF Publishing, A-Three Services Agency, Ltd., 3125 Commercial Avenue, Northbrook, Illinois 60062.

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We report with sadness the recent death of member John Gannon, and offer our sincere condolences to his family.