

THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

Volume LIV, Number 7

Chicago, Illinois

March 1994

General Gordon R. Sullivan on "Grant's Challenges as Commanding General in 1864"

by Barbara Hughett

AS THE YEAR 1864 began in the Civil War-torn United States, there was a bit of cautious optimism in the North, along with a realization that much remained to be done. The Confederate armies were intact and had demonstrated what they could do. In the South there was a haunting realization that a vast amount of territory was gone in spite of southern victories on individual fields of battle.

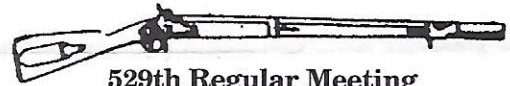
On March 9, 1864, Major General Ulysses S. Grant became a lieutenant general and on March 10, he became commanding general of all Union armies. The North had at last found the effective fighting commander it had so badly needed over the past three years. Much fierce and brutal fighting lay ahead of the severed country before the year would end.

In that spring of 1864, General Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia was encamped around Orange Court House; from mountaintop observation posts, the men could look down upon the great white-tented city of the Army of the Potomac. Beyond the Rapidan River and beyond Lee's men lay Richmond, the capital of the Confederacy. Since the spring of 1861, the cry in the North had been "On to Richmond!" But Grant did not care about Richmond. Taking cities, he understood, was an eighteenth-century concept. "Lee's army will be your main objective," he told General George Gordon Meade, commander of the Army of the Potomac. "Where Lee goes, you will go also."

Grant's winning strategies in the campaigns of 1864, and how the lessons they provide are still being used by today's United States Army will be the points of focus of the address on March 11. General Gordon R. Sullivan will provide a unique interpretive perspective when he speaks on "Grant's Challenges as Commanding General in 1864." He will structure his remarks so as to develop three themes: the broad strategic setting of 1864; the ways that setting and Grant's actions can help us understand the nature of our army and our republic at war; and the ways the



General Gordon R. Sullivan



529th Regular Meeting

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General Gordon R. Sullivan on "Grant's Challenges as Commanding General in 1864"

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Friday, March 11

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Union League Club
65 West Jackson Boulevard

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



Please Note

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

The March meeting is being held at the Union League Club, located at the corner of Jackson Boulevard and Federal Street. Federal Street runs north and south between Dearborn and Clark Streets. Parking is free at the General Parking lot, just south of the Union League Club.

United States Army is using its history, especially Grant's 1864 campaign, to gain perspective on current military requirements.

General Gordon Sullivan, a native of Boston, was commissioned a second lieutenant of armor and awarded a bachelor of arts degree in history from Norwich University. He holds a master of arts degree in political science from the University of New Hampshire. His military schooling includes the Armor School, the Command and General Staff College, and the Army War College.

During his career, he has served in a variety of command and staff positions. His extensive overseas assignments include four tours in Europe, two in Vietnam,
(continued on page 3)

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.

An exhibition entitled "Stephen A. Douglas and the American Union" has recently opened at the University Chicago Library, in the Special Collections Department. The items exhibited are drawn from the Douglas papers in the University of Chicago collection, including recent gifts from the Douglas family. The exhibit will continue through June 15. The Stephen A. Douglas Association has arranged for a special viewing of the exhibit on Saturday, March 19, at 1:30 p.m. Light refreshments will be served. If you would like to attend, please call 312-341-1860 no later than March 17.

BATTLEFIELD PRESERVATION

☆ UPDATE ☆

by David Richert

The State of Maryland has approved over \$500,000 in funds to assist in the acquisition of historic property and easements near the Antietam National Battlefield. A total of \$359,381 will be spent to help the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) acquire the remaining 20.46 acres of the historic Grove Farm, where President Lincoln visited General George McClellan and wounded Union soldiers following the battle of Antietam. Another \$162,000 will go toward the purchase of a conservation easement on the 249-acre Coffman Farm, which is adjacent to the north and west boundaries of the battlefield. Previously, the state approved up to \$10.5 million to acquire land and scenic easements on the state's Civil War sites and greenways.

The Save Historic Antietam Foundation (SHAF), in partnership with Washington County, Maryland, has saved Sharpsburg's 1870s train station. The station was used extensively by Civil War veterans returning to visit the site of the Battle of Antietam. It was purchased from the Norfolk Southern Corp. for an undisclosed amount. SHAF received a \$25,000 grant from the Samuel Freeman Trust of New York for the purchase of the building, which was threatened with demolition. SHAF donated it to the county.

On December 22, 1993, SHAF received the Historic Preservation award for 1992, which is presented annually by the Washington County, Maryland, Commissioners' Office to recognize an individual or group for outstanding efforts in the area of historic preservation. Cited in the award letter were SHAF's purchase of forty acres of the Grove Farm and their acquisition of the railroad station.

The grand opening of the Fisher's Hill Battlefield Civil War Site was held last fall. It marked the culmination of a partnership involving the Association for the Preservation of Civil War Sites, the local Sons of Confederate Veterans, the American Battlefield Protection Program, and the Shenandoah County Economic Development Council. APCWS purchased 195 acres of the battlefield near Strasburg, Virginia, in 1991. In the spring of 1992, the Sons of Confederate Veterans committed to a partnership with APCWS to provide funds and labor to interpret the actions. The Shenandoah County Economic Development Council provided \$2500 for a professional site plan, and \$5000 was awarded by the American Battlefield Protection Program for interpretive waysides.

In other news from the Valley, site of The Civil War Round Table's 1994 tour, the Cedar Creek Battlefield Foundation has opened a Visitors Center and Book Shop. It is housed in an antebellum stone structure on the battlefield. Currently on display there is "Glory Enough," which graphically depicts the Battle of Cedar Creek using reproductions of period sketches and photographs.

The Friends of the Prairie Grove Battlefield Park was instrumental in the recent purchase of an additional 173.5 acres, more than doubling the size of the park. The group was formed last spring to help Prairie Grove fulfill the goals established in its battlefield protection plan, funded in part by the American Battlefield Protection Program.

☞ FEBRUARY MEETING ☞

by Larry Gibbs

Many polls indicate that Henry Clay of Kentucky was the greatest senator in American history. He was one of the "Great Triumvirate," which included Daniel Webster and John C. Calhoun. During his career, Clay was perhaps the most powerful man in the country, after the president. He did everything he could to avert the Civil War, and became known as the "Great Compromiser." Dr. Robert V. Remini spoke on the topic of "Henry Clay, Slavery, and the Coming of the Civil War" on February 11. This presentation was given before 120 members and guests at the 528th regular meeting of The Civil War Round Table.

Using a witty and entertaining style, Dr. Remini drove home several points effectively. Henry Clay knew that "dismemberment of the Union could destroy the United States," according to Remini. Compromise was a strategy that Clay used in an attempt to avoid civil war. However, slavery was the one issue that Henry Clay could not compromise permanently. Slavery was "a horrible institution, an abomination that could not be justified in any moral sense." Remini exclaimed, "Make no mistake about it—there is only one basic factor that caused the Civil War and that is slavery!"

Several compromises over slavery were undone by events, especially an invention and a war—the Mexican War. Remini stated his belief that the Constitution should not be changed, because a contract should not be violated. He claimed that slavery might have died a natural death were it not for the invention of the cotton gin in 1793. Much more cotton could be produced at high levels of profit; hence, slavery became more profitable.

Another major point that Remini made was that Henry Clay tried desperately to prevent the Mexican War. Again, slavery was a problem. Clay realized that California was open for slavery. With an American victory in the Mexican War, the extension of slavery into the territories was a strong possibility. The Wilmot Proviso angered the South, because it said that there could be no more slavery in the territories in the future.

Remini asserted that Henry Clay delayed the beginning of the Civil War by ten years. In 1850, he proposed the Omnibus Bill, which was passed later in separate sections as the Compromise of 1850. The main provisions of this compromise allowed California to be admitted as a free state while providing for the enforcement of a much stronger Fugitive Slave Law. When President Millard Fillmore signed the Compromise of 1850, Remini claimed that this action "gave the U.S. ten years, to gird the country industrially for the Civil War." Furthermore, the Compromise of 1850 allowed for a truly great man, i.e., Lincoln, to emerge. Remini speculated that "if the South would have seceded in 1850, they [the South] would have been successful." Thus, through the work of Henry Clay, the Union survived this great crisis and persevered.

If Clay had lived until 1861, Remini theorized that civil war might again have been avoided, due to Clay's ability to compromise. Remini concluded: "If the South had a plebescite in 1860, a majority of southerners would not have voted for secession. However, the machinery was in place in the hands of southern leaders who wanted slavery to continue." Then the Civil War erupted, caused by the institution of slavery. States' rights, sectionalism, and

minority rights—though important—revolved around slavery.

Abraham Lincoln was a great admirer of Henry Clay, whom he called his "beau ideal of a statesman." Clay was a friend and neighbor of Mary Todd Lincoln's family in Lexington, Kentucky, when she was a girl. Lincoln received his concept of gradual slave emancipation from Henry Clay, who felt that this method was perhaps the only way to end slavery while avoiding a major conflict.

Aside from his talents as a compromiser, Clay possessed considerable oratorical ability. His career stretched over a period called the golden age of orators in America, and Clay was one of the best. Remini indicated that Clay might have been elected president were it not for his fatal flaw—his lust for the presidency.

When he became secretary of state under President John Quincy Adams after the 1824 election, Remini contended that "the American people mistrusted him." The 1824 election became known as the "corrupt bargain" election, and Clay's reputation was permanently tarnished. However, due to his efforts in bringing about the Missouri Compromise and the Compromise of 1850, his place in history is guaranteed.

General Sullivan (from page 1)

and one in Korea. General Sullivan also served in assignments of increasing responsibility on the United States Army Staff in Washington, D.C.

General Sullivan has commanded at platoon through division level in this country and in Europe. He served as assistant commandant of the Armor School at Fort Knox, Kentucky; on the NATO staff as deputy chief of staff for Support of Central Army Group in Germany; and as deputy commandant of the Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. He served as commanding general of the 1st Infantry Division at Fort Riley, Kansas. He has received numerous awards, including the Distinguished Service Medal, the Defense Superior Service Medal, the Legion of Merit, the Purple Heart, and the Combat Infantryman Badge.

On June 23, 1991, General Sullivan assumed his duties as the thirty-second Chief of Staff of the United States Army. In this position, General Sullivan is the senior general officer in the army. He is directly responsible to the Secretary of the Army for the efficiency of the Army and its preparedness for military operations. He also serves as a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

"Unseen Treasures of the Civil War," an exhibit featuring items from the Grand Army of the Republic and private collections, has opened in the Special Collections Exhibit Hall of the Harold Washington Library, and will run through May 21. Included are items from the collections of Round Table members Gordon Dammann, Marshall Krolick, and Robert Walter.

Several gallery talks will be given, and some films will be shown throughout the exhibit's run. The talks will include: March 4, 12:15 p.m., A. Wilson Greene on "Battlefield Preservation and Conservation"; March 29, 5:30 p.m., Gordon Dammann on "Civil War Medicine"; and April 28, 5:30 p.m., Ralph G. Newman on "If Lincoln Had Lived."

The New Books

Compiled by C. Robert Douglas



- Sears, Stephen W., ed. *The Civil War: A Treasury of Art and Literature*. Macmillan. 1992. \$75.00.
- Slade, A.D. A.T.A. Tolbert: *Southern Gentleman in Blue*. Morningside Bookshop. 1992. \$24.95.
- Smith, David P. *Frontier Defense in the Civil War: Texas Rangers and Rebels*. Texas A&M University Press. 1991. \$39.50.
- Sutton, Joseph J. *History of the 2nd West Virginia Cavalry*. Blue Acorn Press. 1992. \$30.00. Original of 1892.
- Trudeau, Noah A. *The Last Citadel—Petersburg, Virginia, June 1864—April 1865*. LSU Press. 1992. Pbk. \$16.95. Original of 1991.

Nominating Committee Chair Mary Abroe reminds all past presidents that the 1994 Nominating Committee meeting will be held on Saturday, March 12, at 10:00 a.m., in the law offices of Deutsch, Levy & Engel, 225 West Washington Street. Please contact Mary (708-251-4745) by March 9 to let her know whether you will be attending the meeting.

The **Third Annual Kankakee Valley Round Table Civil War Symposium** will take place on March 26 in Bourbonnais, Illinois. Speakers will include Edwin C. Bearss, Dennis Frye, and Gordon Dammann. For additional information, call Steve Goodknecht, at 815-939-3568.

The **Sixth Annual Mid-Atlantic Regional Conference of Civil War Round Tables** will be held on April 16, in Iselin, New Jersey. Among the scheduled speakers are Edwin C. Bearss and John Michael Priest. For information, call Jay Jorgensen at 908-396-4320.

Longtime Round Table friend Al Scheller, who served as one of our guides during last May's tour of Vicksburg, is recuperating from a broken hip. Cards and letters can be sent to him at the Edward White Hospital, 2323 Ninth Avenue North, Room 308-A, St. Petersburg, Florida 33713.

The history of The Round Table, *The Civil War 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.

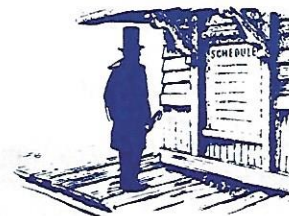
Schimmelfennig Boutique

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 \$10.00 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.

March 11: General Gordon R. Sullivan on "Grant's Challenges as Commanding General in 1864" (This meeting will be held at the Union League Club)

April 8: Major Frank K. McKenzie, USMC, on "Combined Operations Against Charleston"

May 5-8: Annual Battlefield Tour—Shenandoah Valley

May 13: Robert K. Krick on "Lawyers, Politicians, and Clerks: The Regimental Command of Lee's Army"

June 10: Stacey Allen on "New Discoveries at Shiloh"

July 31: Annual Round Table Picnic

New Members

Andrew Gelman, 1650 Sunnyside, Highland Park, IL 60035
Elizabeth Grady, 175 East Delaware Place, Chicago, IL 60611, 312-337-0388

Robert J. Miller, 700 East 91st Street, Chicago, IL 60619

Change of Address

Robert A. Carlson, 935 West Golden Lane, Lake Forest, IL 60045

President Kurt Carlson has announced that there will be a brief meeting of the Union League Committee immediately following the March meeting.

Past President Brooks Davis addressed two groups in North Carolina recently. On February 13, he spoke on "Jefferson Davis and Abraham Lincoln and Their Ladies" at the Sidney Lanier Library. On February 14, he addressed the Rotary Club in Tryon, North Carolina, on "Jefferson Davis and Abraham Lincoln as Commanders-in-Chief."

Free at Last: A Documentary History of Slavery, Freedom, and the Civil War has been selected as the winner of the 1994 Lincoln Prize. The book is a collection of letters, reports, and depositions from the National Archives examining the issues of slavery and emancipation from the viewpoint of African-Americans who lived during the Civil War period. The book, edited by Ira Berlin, Barbara J. Fields, Steven Miller, Joseph P. Reidy, and Leslie Rowland and published by The New Press, was honored at ceremonies held on February 17 at the Pierpont Morgan Library and the New York Public Library. The \$50,000 Lincoln Prize is awarded annually by Gettysburg College for excellence in Civil War studies.

The Vacant Chair by Reid Mitchell (Oxford University Press) won the second prize of \$10,000. This book, using excerpts from diaries, letters, and logs of Union soldiers, attempts to show that stronger family support was a significant factor in the Union victory over Confederate troops.