

THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

Volume LVI, Number 4

Chicago, Illinois

December 1995

William C. (Jack) Davis on "Davis, Beauregard, and Johnston: The Triple Play that Crippled the Confederacy"

by Barbara Hughett

CONFEDERATE Generals P.T.G. Beauregard and Joseph E. Johnston were both talented and capable military leaders who played major roles in some pivotal Southern successes during the course of the American Civil War. Beauregard graduated second in his class at West Point in 1838; in the class of 1829, Johnston graduated thirteenth. Yet their inability to get along with Confederate President Jefferson Davis (who ranked twenty-third in the class of 1828) was detrimental to the careers of both. On December 8, William C. (Jack) Davis will address The Civil War Round Table. His topic will be "Davis, Beauregard, and Johnston: The Triple Play that Crippled the Confederacy."

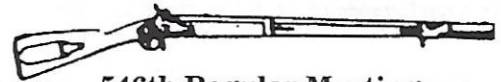
Davis's talk will be an examination of the personalities of these three key figures, and an analysis of their relationships—or lack of relationships; what went wrong between them and why; and the impact that all of this had on the course of the Confederacy. All three men come in for a fair share of the blame, and the breakdown of their relations appears almost inevitable given their natures.

Davis was in an executive position that by nature and temperament he was not suited to hold. Beauregard was hampered by his McClellanesque ego and all the early adulation he received in 1861, and could not subordinate himself to anyone happily. Johnston simply lacked either the moral courage or the ability to command anything larger than a division. Yet logic and fortune had put these three in vital positions in which they had to work together—the last thing they proved able to do. In their failure was born not a little of the resulting downfall of the Confederacy.



William C. (Jack) Davis

William C. (Jack) Davis is one of the most prolific Civil War authors of all time, in addition to being a popular lecturer and a frequent commentator on television programs and series about the Civil War. He received both his bachelor's and master's degrees in history at Sonoma State College (now Sonoma State University) in Rohnert Park, California. Among the important editorial positions he has held are those of editor of *American History*



546th Regular Meeting

☆ ☆ ☆

William C. (Jack) Davis on "Davis, Johnston, and Beauregard: A Triple Play that Crippled the Confederacy"

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Friday, December 8

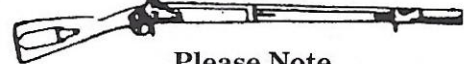
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Union League Club
65 West Jackson Boulevard

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

\$25 - The Civil War Round Table of Chicago members
\$30 - Nonmembers

Entree: Sirloin of Beef with Black Truffle Sauce
or Catch of the Day



Please Note

Make your reservation by Wednesday, December 6, by calling The Civil War Round Table offices at 312-341-1865. People who attend without having made a reservation will pay a \$5 walk-in charge. If you make a reservation and then find you cannot attend, please call to cancel or you will be billed for a dinner. **No last-minute orders for the Catch of the Day can be honored. The chef must have at least twenty-four hours notice.**

The Union League Club is 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.

Illustrated and *Civil War Times Illustrated* magazines (1972-76) and executive editor (1982-84) and corporate editorial director (1984-86) of Historical Times, Inc. He currently is a consulting editor at Stackpole Books.

Davis also serves as historical consultant and frequent on-camera commentator for many Civil War pre-

(continued on page 3)

THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE



Founded December 3, 1940
 410 South Michigan Avenue, Suite 841
 Chicago, Illinois 60605-1402
 Phone: 312-341-1865
 Fax: 312-341-1863

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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 Membership Committee, 410 South Michigan Avenue, Suite 841, Chicago, Illinois 60605-1402.



Season's Greetings

from the officers of The Civil War Round Table
and the Newsletter staff!



BATTLEFIELD PRESERVATION

☆ UPDATE ☆

by David Richert

It appears that the Brandy Station battlefield may be saved after all. In late September developer Lee Sammis agreed in principle to sell more than 1500 acres near Culpeper, Virginia, to the Association for the Preservation of Civil War Sites (APCWS). The property includes the scene of the heaviest fighting during the June 9, 1863, battle. The purchase price is estimated at about \$6 million and sale terms call for a \$3 million payment at closing, with the additional \$3 million due in three years.

The agreement follows seven years of efforts by the preservation community to prevent development at Brandy Station. The contract to purchase the property is contingent on a pending foreclosure action against James Lazor, president of Benton Ventures Inc., who planned to construct a racetrack on 423 acres of the land. Benton Ventures was unable to comply with the terms of the contract for the purchase of the land, according to developer Sammis. On October 16 Benton Ventures filed for bankruptcy protection.

The APCWS has already embarked on a campaign to raise the \$6 million, and an anonymous donor has come forward with a \$500,000 challenge grant. Donations for Brandy Station can be sent to APCWS, PO Box 1862, Fredericksburg, Virginia 22402. Checks should be marked for "Brandy Station."

The Bentonville Battleground Historical Association (BBHA) has turned over the deed to a 3.5 acre tract to the Historic Sites Section of the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources. The tract contains trenches that formed a portion of the main Union line on the second and third days of the battle. The Battle of Bentonville was fought on March 19-21, 1865, when 20,000 Confederate troops under General Joseph Johnston attempted to check the advance through North Carolina of General William T. Sherman's 60,000 veterans. There were more than 4,000 casualties. Less than 2 percent of the 6,000 acres the battle covered is preserved within the boundaries of the Bentonville Battleground State Historic Site.

Purchase of the BBHA tract was made possible by a grant from the North Carolina Natural Heritage Trust. BBHA originally bought the land at public auction and cooperated with state officials to submit the grant proposal that made state acquisition possible.

The threat of construction of a McDonald's near the Wilderness battlefield is apparently over, but according to Fredericksburg & Spotsylvania National Military Park historian Robert Krick, other development is possible. The McDonald's was to be built at the intersection of Routes 3 and 20 in Orange County. "The whole thing is dead," said Krick. "But it doesn't mean something else isn't going to happen there. It's a key intersection."

Meanwhile, no construction has taken place on a 232-acre tract near the "Bloody Angle" at Spotsylvania that was rezoned last year to accommodate 232 homes on "Battlefield Hills." Krick said the owners of the property, who pressed through the rezoning, do not appear inclined to pursue development themselves.

☞ NOVEMBER MEETING ☞

by Larry Gibbs

At the 545th meeting on November 10, Dr. David Herbert Donald, Charles Warren Professor of American History at Harvard University, spoke to The Civil War Round Table for the first time, addressing 151 members and guests. Donald is a recognized Civil War and Reconstruction scholar. Reflecting his highly-acclaimed new book, *Lincoln*, the topic of Donald's speech was "The Most Shut-Mouth Man: the Reticence of Abraham Lincoln."

The study of Abraham Lincoln presents a major problem for modern biographers, Donald noted. "Lincoln did not explain publicly why he did what he did." William Herndon, Lincoln's law partner, referred to Lincoln as "a very reticent man—a most shut-mouth man." This reticence forces a biographer "to tease out what Lincoln thought and felt." Donald proclaimed that "it is a dangerous game for biographers to try to infer Lincoln's motives, but that is why there are many different interpretations about Lincoln. However, to find a theme, a biographer must look at Lincoln's character and motives."

In his address, Donald gave several examples to drive home his point. After the Battle of Antietam (September 17, 1862), Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation. Why was the Emancipation Proclamation issued when it was? According to Donald, the historian must use speculation to deal with this type of question. "There was virtually no mention of foreign involvement in the Civil War before September of 1862 and Lincoln claimed that he had no interest in ending slavery in the states," explained Donald. These reasons, then, do not explain the timing of the Proclamation. Instead, "Lincoln saw himself as an accidental instrument of God," Donald said. Thus, he opined, "Lincoln made a covenant or pact with God that if the Rebel invasion of the North was thwarted it would be a signal to free the slaves."

Another instance where the Lincoln scholar must rely on the necessity of speculation is the Gettysburg Address. Why did Lincoln accept the invitation to speak at Gettysburg on November 19, 1863? From Donald's evidence, Lincoln needed a forum to speak to the country. Congress was not in session and Lincoln had limited resources to appeal to the public. The Union cause was in serious trouble at this time. Lincoln realized that Edward Everett, a very distinguished orator and the opening speaker at Gettysburg, would speak about national unity. In his famous Gettysburg Address, Lincoln's 272 words went beyond national unity. "Lincoln reminded his listeners that the United States was a nation and that the U.S., as in the Declaration of Independence, promised freedom—a new birth of freedom." In essence, the U.S. was more than the U.S. Constitution because of this promise of freedom. "Lincoln never stated his purpose for going to Gettysburg, but modern historians must speculate using the best available evidence," Donald said.

"Contradictory accounts of Lincoln are even more difficult to deal with," asserted Donald. The candidacy for Lincoln's 1864 vice-president is a case in point. Lincoln never explained his role in the nomination, but some have theorized that Lincoln perhaps felt that Hannibal Hamlin was too extreme (radical) on emancipation to continue as vice-president. Donald contended that "Lincoln neither thought nor cared about his vice-president;

he assumed that he would live another four years as president without any problem." A good deal of conflicting evidence over this issue could lead historians to disagree, however.

In response to a question about rating Lincoln as commander-in-chief, Donald stated that he preferred to not rate or rank any president. However, he claimed that Lincoln grew as a military leader. "Lincoln was unprepared to handle military affairs at the outset of the Civil War. He felt he had to look to the experts, i.e., his generals. Lincoln soon realized that something had to be done after several failures on the battlefield. He saw that the military objective was not to capture Richmond and more land, but to destroy Confederate armies." Before General Grant began his 1864 massive attacks on the Army of Northern Virginia, Lincoln allowed Grant to think that he (Grant) came up with this strategy. In reality it was Lincoln, who was searching for a commander who agreed with his ideas about warfare.

WILLIAM C. (JACK) DAVIS (continued from page 1) sentations on television. He is perhaps best well-known for his many appearances on the Greystone Communications/Arts and Entertainment Network series, "Civil War Journal." He was also historical consultant to the ABC Television Network for the David Wolper production, "North and South," in 1985; to Peter Batty Productions for a five-hour documentary, *The Divided Union*, presented on television in the United Kingdom in 1987; and is currently a consultant for the History Channel series, "Movies in Time."

In addition to having contributed chapters or introductions to more than fifteen separate anthologies and regularly writing articles for major magazines and professional journals, he has written or edited—since 1974—over forty books on the Civil War! These works include: *Breckinridge: Statesman, Soldier, Symbol* (1974); *The Battle of New Market* (1975; 1993); *The Orphan Brigade* (1980; 1994); two volumes in *The Imperiled Union* series (1982-83); six volumes in *The Image of War, 1861-1865* series (1982-84); *Gettysburg: The Story Behind the Scenery* (1983); *Death in the Trenches* (1986); *Commanders of the Civil War* (1990); *Jefferson Davis: The Man and His Hour* (1991); six volumes in *The Civil War Library* series (1991-93); *The Confederate General*, six volumes, (1990-91); *The Civil War Cookbook* (1993); *Concise History of the Civil War* (1994); "A Government of Our Own": *The Making of the Confederacy* (1994), and *Brothers in Arms* (1994).

His many honors and awards include: three Jefferson Davis Awards from the Confederate Memorial Literary Society (1974, 1978, and 1994); an Honorary Doctorate from Lincoln Memorial University (1976); the Fletcher Pratt Award of the New York Civil War Round Table (1977); the T. Harry Williams Memorial Award of the Baton Rouge Civil War Round Table (1988); and the Harry S. Truman Award of the Kansas City Civil War Round Table (1993).

This will be the third time Jack Davis has appeared before The Round Table. In January 1975, he spoke on "The Battle of New Market." His topic in January 1982 was "The Siege of Charleston, 1861-1865."

The New Books

Compiled by C. Robert Douglas



- Reidy, Joseph P. *From Slavery to Agrarian Capitalism in the Cotton South: Central Georgia, 1800-1880*. U. of North Carolina Press. 1992. \$45.00.
- Reynolds, Arlene, ed. *The Civil War Memories of Elizabeth Bacon Custer*. U. of Texas Press. 1994. \$24.95.
- Rhea, Gordon C. *The Battle of the Wilderness, May 5-6, 1864*. LSU Press. 1994. \$34.95.
- Roberts, Bobby and Carol Moneyhon, eds. *Portraits of Conflict: A Photographic History of Mississippi in the Civil War*. U. of Arkansas Press. 1993. \$60.00.
- Robinson, Charles M., III. *Shark of the Confederacy: The Story of the CSS Alabama*. Naval Institute Press. 1994. \$25.00.
- Rollins, Richard, ed. *Pickett's Charge! Eyewitness Accounts*. Published by author. 1994. \$35.00. Pbk. \$18.00.

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Just a reminder: Please call in your dinner reservation EARLY! To sweeten our request, we will have an Early Bird Raffle for those who call in their reservation by December 5. You may be one of two lucky winners of a free cocktail! Help us out and be a winner!

A new Lincoln exhibit will open at the Chicago Historical Society, Clark and North Avenues, on February 12, 1996, and run through February 13, 1997. "The Last Best Hope of Earth: Abraham Lincoln and the Promise of America" was first shown at The Huntington Library in California a couple of years ago. It brings together key items from three of the most important collections of Lincolniana ever assembled: the Henry Horner Lincoln Collection of The Illinois State Historical Library in Springfield, Illinois; the Lincoln Collection at The Huntington Library in San Marino, California; and the private collection of Louise and Barry Taper, of Beverly Hills, California. This exhibit will provide visitors with a comprehensive view of Lincoln and his vision for the country whose government he called the "last best hope of earth."

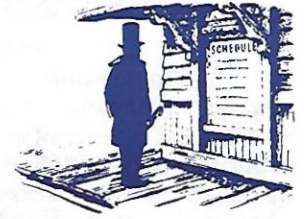
Schimmelfennig Boutique

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.

In addition to The Round Table history and *The Continuing Civil War*, the essays from the Fiftieth Anniversary Proceedings, the following items are available at each monthly meeting: Lapel pins, Mugs, Meeting Tapes, Civil War Buff posters and T-Shirts, CWRT T-shirts, polos, and sweatshirts.

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 Union League Club, 65 West Jackson Boulevard, the second Friday in each month, except as noted.

December 8: William C. (Jack) Davis on "Davis, Johnston, and Beauregard: A Triple Play that Crippled the Confederacy"

January 12: Brigadier General Harold W. Nelson on "Teaching Generalship on Civil War Battlefields"

February 16: James Ogden on "The Battles of Chickamauga and Chattanooga" (Please note: this is the **third** Friday of the month.)

March 8: Brian S. Wills on "The Life of Nathan Bedford Forrest: A Battle from the Start"

April 12: John C. (Jack) Waugh on "The Class of 1846"

May 1-5: Annual Battlefield Tour: Chickamauga and Chattanooga

May 10: Charles P. Roland on "Reflections on Lee: A Historian's Assessment"

June 14: Michael W. Kauffman on "The Lincoln Assassination — The Investigation Continues"

NEW MEMBERS

Michael Rubino, 9730 N. 16th, Plainwell, MI 49080, 616-344-9172

Jerri-Jennifer Sharp, 415 Franklin Avenue, River Forest, IL 60305, 708-366-7368

David Surdam, 850 N. State Street, Chicago, IL 60610, 312-787-5707

Round Table Trustee Karen Krieger will address the luncheon meeting of the Union League Club Civil War Round Table on Monday, December 18. Her topic will be "Chicago Architecture and the Civil War." The reception begins at 11:30 a.m.; lunch is served at noon. The per-person cost is \$15. To make reservations, please call 312-435-5000.

Former longtime Round Table member Elmer Pendarvis died in October. He had been personnel manager for Lincoln Federal Savings & Loan Company and prior to that was manufacturing plant manager for Olson Rugs. Elmer had come on many of our battlefield tours and was also active with the Salt Creek Civil War Round Table. He had been bedridden for the past four years. We offer our sincere condolences to his family.

The 15th Annual Midwest Civil War Round Table Conference will take place on April 19-20, 1996, in Cincinnati, Ohio, hosted by the Cincinnati Civil War Round Table. Speakers will include A. Wilson Greene, John Hennessy, and Jim Ogden. The cost is \$100 per person; special hotel rates are \$72 per night. For more information, call Michael Rhein at 513-831-4031.