

THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

Volume LVI, Number 8

Chicago, Illinois

April 1996

John C. Waugh on "The Class of 1846"

by Barbara Hughett

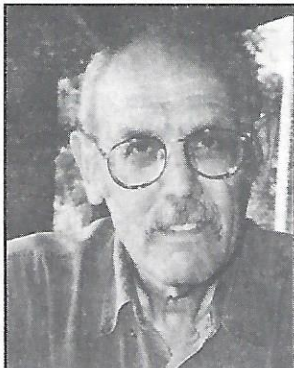
NO SINGLE CLASS at West Point—or possibly any academy—has been so indelibly written into history as the one that graduated from the United States Military Academy at West Point in 1846. It was the largest pre-Civil War class and undoubtedly the most distinguished. It produced from its ranks some twenty Civil War generals—on both sides.

Among the members of this unforgettable class were Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson, George Brinton McClellan, Ambrose Powell Hill, Darius Nash Couch, George Edward Pickett, Cadmus Marcellus Wilcox, and George Stoneham. It fought in three wars and left the nation a lasting legacy of bravery, brilliance, and bloodshed.

John C. (Jack) Waugh will address The Round Table on April 12 on the topic of "The Class of 1846." He is the author of the acclaimed 1994 book of the same title. A journalist, Waugh for seventeen years (1956-1973) was a staff correspondent and bureau chief for *The Christian Science Monitor*. From 1973-1976, he served as a media specialist on the staff of Republican Vice President Nelson Rockefeller of New York. For six years (1983-1989), he was press secretary to Democratic U.S. Senator Jeff Bingaman of New Mexico.

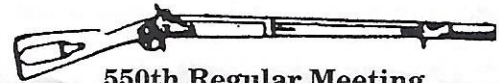
Between these stints in the political arena he was a freelance writer, contributing to diverse magazines and periodicals, such as *American Heritage*, *Civil War Times Illustrated*, *The New York Times*, *Sports Illustrated*, *The New Republic*, *The Nation*, and *The Los Angeles Times Magazine*. Over the years, he has also acted as an editorial consultant to various establishments and governmental agencies. He won the American Bar Association's

Silver Gavel Award for the best national reporting in 1972 for a series he wrote on American prisons. His book *The Class of 1846* won the New York Civil War Round Table's Fletcher Pratt Literary Award for the best non-fiction book on the Civil War for 1994. It was a main selection of the History Book Club and an alternate selection of the Book-of-the-Month Club.



John C. Waugh

Waugh began research-



550th Regular Meeting

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John C. Waugh on "The Class of 1846"

☆ ☆ ☆

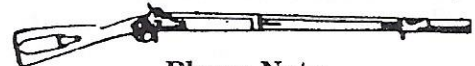
Friday, April 12

☆ ☆ ☆

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: Grilled Minute Sirloin Steak with
Mushroom Sauce or Catch of the Day



Please Note

Make your reservation by Wednesday, April 10, 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.

ing and writing *The Class of 1846* after leaving the Bingaman staff in 1989. He considers himself today a historical reporter, believing that covering the past is not unlike covering a breaking news story in the present. The only difference is that all the sources are dead; he greatly prefers it that way. It means that he gets to go back to his favorite century on a regular basis. For his next book, now in progress, he is back there again reporting on Lincoln's reelection campaign of 1864.

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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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 Larry Gibbs, Robert Girardi

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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.

A reenactment of Abraham Lincoln's funeral procession will take place at noon on April 14, at Rosehill Cemetery, 5800 North Ravenswood. For information call 312-561-5940.

BATTLEFIELD PRESERVATION

☆ UPDATE ☆
 by David Richert

The Association for the Preservation of Civil War sites is helping to preserve a large redoubt at Lee's Mill on the Virginia peninsula and a portion of the Sailor's Creek battlefield. The Association is funding land purchases at each battlefield temporarily, pending eventual reimbursement by government entities that could not come up with the funds in time to meet demands of the sellers.

At Sailor's Creek, APCWS purchased 97 acres, to be added to the 217-acre state park. The state will reimburse APCWS for the \$143,444 purchase price. The six-acre Lee's Mill site, within the city limits of Newport News, comprises well-preserved earthworks built in 1861-62 as part of the Confederates' Warwick River Line, a defensive line extending across the lower peninsula south of Yorktown. The Warwick River Line was the strongest of three defensive lines built to defend Richmond. It stretched twelve miles across the peninsula from Yorktown on the York River to the Warwick River. Union troops under General George McClellan encountered Confederates defending Lee's Mill on April 5, 1862. The City of Newport News will reimburse the \$75,000 purchase price.

The Gettysburg National Military Park and Gettysburg College have concluded an agreement that will require the college to screen an excavated railroad cut and pledge to maintain a large retaining wall in perpetuity. A 1990 land swap, in which the park gave the cut and seven acres to the college in exchange for scenic easements, led to extensive excavation of the cut by the college for the siting of railroad tracks.

Park supporters had urged a reconstruction of the cut, but the National Park Service concluded that Congress would not fund it and that a suit against the college was futile. The agreement calls for the college to plant tree screens along the tracks and build a road through the campus that will help conceal the cut. It will also maintain a wall that prevents park land from eroding into the cut. The college estimates the cost to carry out the plan at \$275,000.

The Committee to Preserve & Protect Pilot Knob Battlefield and The Conservation Fund have begun a \$130,000 fund-raising campaign to purchase 456 acres on Pilot Knob Mountain south of St. Louis. In the Battle of Pilot Knob, which occurred September 27, 1864, Confederate General Sterling Price attacked a strong Federal position, but called it off after his infantry suffered more than 1,000 casualties in twenty minutes. Price then abandoned his advance on St. Louis and left Missouri, ending the last major Confederate initiative west of the Mississippi. Contributions to the fund-raising campaign, which are tax deductible, can be sent to The Conservation Fund, 1800 N. Kent St., Suite 1120, Arlington, Virginia 22209. Checks should be designated for Pilot Knob.

Leesburg, Virginia, has applied for a \$2.1 million grant to acquire 135 acres of the battlefield of Ball's Bluff, where Federal troops met a stunning defeat on October

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❖ MARCH MEETING ❖

by Larry Gibbs

On March 8, at the 549th regular meeting of The Civil War Round Table, 146 members and guests heard Brian S. Wills speak on "Nathan Bedford Forrest: The Uncivil Warrior." Wills used material from his highly-praised book entitled *A Battle from the Start: the Life of Nathan Bedford Forrest* (1992). He based his presentation on the personal characteristics and military experience of this fascinating Civil War character.

Forrest, according to Wills, was "a larger than life personality — very interesting, controversial, and human." Stories related to Forrest abound with southern honor. To Forrest, it was "less than honorable to surrender; to do less is to slander the dead." Forrest, who eventually rose from private to lieutenant general, stressed his own self-reliance and unpredictability. Wills asserted, "Forrest did not play by everyone else's rules — he played it his way. He displayed an exuberance as a warrior, making use of psychological warfare whenever possible."

As one of the foremost cavalry leaders of the Civil War, Forrest relied on common sense. He kept the enemy occupied with a frontal attack followed by threats to the flanks. "A secret to his success," attested Wills, "was to keep the artillery close to the action." A good example of this strategy was his spectacular victory at Brice's Cross Roads (June 10, 1864). Initially, Forrest was heavily outnumbered, but he used a series of sharp attacks by his cavalry to keep the Union off balance. Later, when the Rebel artillery arrived, the Confederates were able to press their assaults. After this victory, the cavalry of Forrest spent the next two days hounding the retreating Federals.

The reputation of Forrest as a military genius has been stained by two incidents. In March and April, 1864, Forrest determined to attack the isolated Union garrison at Fort Pillow, Tennessee, on the Mississippi River. The Union forces included many African-Americans and other Federal soldiers from Tennessee. On April 12, the Rebels attacked. Remaining outside Fort Pillow, Forrest lost control of events inside the fort. Anger and racial animosity led some Confederates to give the Federals no mercy. Although the Rebels were the attacking party, they lost fourteen killed while the Union defenders lost 231. Wills proclaimed, "Forrest did not design to kill all of the Union troops, but some Federals were killed that should not have been. Forrest was probably upset at Fort Pillow because he lost control of his troops." In any event, as commander of the troops on the scene, Forrest was responsible. (Wills will make a presentation on the Fort Pillow "Massacre" at the Midwestern Conference of Round Tables in Chicago on April 19, 1997.)

The other charge that plagued Forrest involved the beginning of the Ku Klux Klan. Wills stated, "Although Forrest was a former slave owner, he was not a founder of the KKK, but he knew things that indicated he must have been the first grand wizard of the secret organization." Never completely adjusting to the new realities of Reconstruction, Forrest tried to help restore white conservative Democrats to power as soon as possible.

Forrest's ferocity as a warrior was legendary. He claimed that he killed thirty Union soldiers while twenty-nine horses were killed beneath him. He successfully

stopped a raid by Union Colonel Abel Streight against the Western and Atlantic Railroad in April and May of 1863. In forcing Streight to surrender, Forrest used psychological warfare and deception against a stronger opponent. "He was master of this type of warfare," said Wills. "He understood the basic premise of war — war means fighting and fighting means killing!" However, Wills stated that he could not prove that Forrest ever claimed that he got there "firstest with the mostest."

Three lectures remain of the five-lecture series given at the Chicago Historical Society in conjunction with its new exhibit, "The Last Best Hope of Earth: Abraham Lincoln and the Promise of America." Each lecture begins at 6:00 p.m. and is followed by a social occasion, where those in attendance can enjoy a glass of wine, a bite to eat, and an informal conversation with the evening's guest scholar. A buffet, featuring selections from the menu of the Society's Big Shoulders Cafe, is served. The cost for each reception is \$10 for Society members and \$12 for non-members. To make reservations, call 312-642-4600, extension 318.

Tuesday, April 9: "Abraham Lincoln and the Political Conversation" -- Phillip Shaw Paludan

Tuesday, April 23: "Emancipation, Black Freedom, and the Legacy of Slavery" -- Eric Foner

Tuesday, May 7: Open Forum, "The Lincoln Legacy in Our Time" -- Thomas F. Schwartz, moderator.

Grammy Award-winning diva Clamma Dale has said that Americans need to empathize with both the Northern and the Southern experiences during the Civil War, in an article in a recent issue of *The Civil War News*. The African-American soprano sings the Confederacy's anthem along with other decidedly politically incorrect Rebel songs. She said "I feel no hostility about what happened in the past. Each side had people who died for what they believed in. We are all Americans. We all lost. That's enough. We have not ever really truly healed. I want to be part of that." The concert and opera singer has given three Carnegie Hall concerts of songs from the Civil War. She recently released a solo recording, a compact disc titled "Unforgotten, An Album of Healing," featuring fifteen Civil War songs.

WAUGH (continued from page 1)

Currently a resident of Pantego, Texas, Waugh was born in California and raised in Arizona. He is a graduate of the University of Arizona (journalism major, history minor), and has done graduate work in history and political science at UCLA and St. John's College. He has been a lifelong student of the American Civil War.

PRESERVATION UPDATE (continued from page 2)

21, 1861. A national cemetery to the Union dead and a portion of the battlefield are currently preserved, but the adjoining tract that Leesburg wants to buy is threatened by development. The funding would come from The Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act, which makes federal highway monies available for states to disburse to projects such as historic preservation, and the Conservation Fund.

The New Books

Compiled by C. Robert Douglas



- Shingleton, Royce. *High Seas Confederate: The Life and Times of John Newland Maffitt*. U. of South Carolina Press. 1994. \$27.95.
- Shue, Robert S. *Morning at Willoughby Run: July 1, 1863*. Thomas Publications. 1993. \$24.95.
- Simon, John Y., ed. *General Grant by Matthew Arnold with a Rejoinder by Mark Twain*. Kent State U. Press. 1995. Pbk. \$7.00. Original of 1887.
- Simpson, John A. S.A. *Cunningham and the Confederate Heritage*. U. of Georgia Press. 1994. \$35.00.
- Slade, A.D. *That Sterling Soldier: The Life of David A. Russell*. Morningside Bookshop. 1995. \$30.00.
- Smith, David P. *Frontier Defense in the Civil War: Texas Rangers and Rebels*. Texas A&M U. Press. 1993. \$39.50.
- Somas, Jean P. and Frank L. Byrne, eds. *A Jewish Colonel in the Civil War. Marcus Spiegel of the Ohio Volunteers*. U. of Nebraska Press. 1995. \$12.95.

Noted historian and author Wiley Sword will address the monthly luncheon meeting of The Union League Club Civil War Round Table on Monday, April 29. The reception begins at 11:30 a.m.; lunch is served at noon. The cost is \$15 per person. Reservations are required. To make reservations, call 312-435-5000.

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.

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 April 9. You may be one of two lucky winners of a free cocktail! Help us out and be a winner!

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.

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

Steve Adams, 1303 Mulford, Evanston, IL 60202, 847-475-5327

John A. Callanan, 4435 N. Beacon, Chicago, IL 60640, 312-275-6995

James J. McManus, 10631 S. Seeley, Chicago, IL 60643, 312-445-9126

Gary D. Pett, 1251 Bar Harbor Terrace, Northbrook, IL 60062, 847-498-9145

Cary Van Ness, 424 S. Brainard Avenue, LaGrange, IL 60525, 708-579-3544

A Correction: James M. McPherson, recipient of The Round Table's 1996 Nevins-Freeman Award, will receive his award and deliver his acceptance address on **Friday, October 18, 1996**. An incorrect date was listed in the March Newsletter.

The Stephen A. Douglas Association will hold its annual luncheon at the Hyatt on Printer's Row on Saturday, April 20, at 12:30 p.m. Illinois State Historian Thomas F. Schwartz will speak on "Stephen A. Douglas, Esq.: The First Lincoln-Douglas Legal Case." The cost is \$25 per person. The luncheon will be preceded by a ceremony and wreath-laying at the Douglas Tomb State Historic Site, 636 East 35th Street. Former Round Table President (and current Douglas Association President) C. Robert Douglas will provide a brief commentary at the ceremony. For information and to make reservations, call 312-341-1860.

The current issue of the new publication, *Chicago Books in Review*, features a front-page review of Round Table member George Levy's book, *To Die in Chicago: Confederate Prisoners at Camp Douglas, 1862-1865* (1995), as well as a special section on Lincolniana, in which former Round Table President Barbara Hughett's book, *The Lincoln College Story: 1865-1995* (1995) is noted. This very impressive new venture is the creation of Robert Remer, former deputy and acting superintendent of the Chicago Public Library.