

THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

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Chicago, Illinois

March 1998

Mark Bradley on "The Battle of Bentonville"

by Barbara Hughett

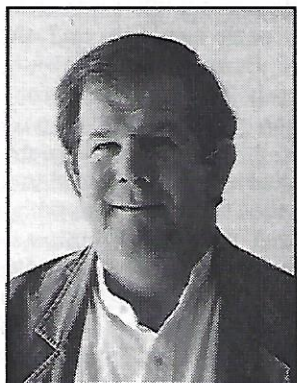
Though often overlooked because it occurred just weeks before Robert E. Lee's surrender at Appomattox and Abraham Lincoln's assassination, the Battle of Bentonville was the culminating event of Union General William T. Sherman's 1865 Carolinas Campaign, and it was the last major Confederate open-field offensive of the war. Bentonville was neither a large battle (Union losses: 1,527; Confederate losses: 2,606) nor a decisive engagement compared with Gettysburg or Chancellorsville. Yet it was a major contest, involving 80,000 troops.

At Goldsboro, North Carolina, Sherman joined his army with that of Generals John Schofield and Alfred Terry, and gained rail connections to the large supply of bases on the Carolina coast. Sherman's campaign had laid to waste a forty-five-mile swath of countryside from Savannah, Georgia, to Goldsboro. On March 13, Mark Bradley will address The Round Table; his topic will be "The Battle of Bentonville."

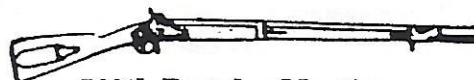
A native of Indianapolis, Mark Bradley grew up in Middletown, New Jersey, and Grand Rapids, Michigan. He has been a resident of Raleigh, North Carolina since 1969. He says that his interest in the Civil War "dates back to my days as a grade-schooler, when my grandfather (a fine historian in his own right) used to tell me stories about the war with an immediacy that made it seem as if it just happened." His first book, the recently-published *Last Stand in the Carolinas: The Battle of Bentonville*, is the culmination of a lifetime's interest in the American Civil War.

Bradley claims that his overriding interest in the Civil War in North Carolina "is due in large part to the fact that our state has one of the best-preserved battle-

fields in America—Bentonville Battleground State Historic Site." In 1993, the Congressionally-mandated Civil War Sites Advisory Commission ranked Bentonville sixth on its list of 384 battlefield sites, based on national significance and need of immediate preservation action. Mark will be one of our tour guides on this Round Table's annual battlefield tour (April 29-May 3), "Western Armies in the Carolina Campaign." He is offering his March



Mark Bradley



569th Regular Meeting

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Mark Bradley on "The Battle of Bentonville"

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Friday, March 13

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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: Grilled Minute Steak or
Catch of the Day



Please Note

Make your reservation by Wednesday, March 11, by calling Registrar Carole Le Claire at 847-698-1438. 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.

NEW PARKING POLICY: Effective immediately, the new parking rate is \$8.00 if you park between the hours of 4:30-10:30 p.m. in the lot adjacent to the Union League Club. If you do not get your ticket validated or park beyond the hours listed, you must pay the full amount.

13 program as an "introduction to the upcoming tour."

Bradley is almost finished with his second book on the Civil War in North Carolina. It's about the final operations of Sherman's and Confederate General Joseph Johnston's armies in April 1865, and the surrender

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THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE



Founded December 3, 1940
601 South La Salle Building, Suite C-817
Chicago Illinois 60605
Phone: 847-698-1438

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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, 601 South La Salle Building, Suite C-817, Chicago, Illinois 60605.

The 20th Annual Confederate Historical Institute will be held on April 2-5 at Fredericksburg, Virginia. Speakers will include Ed Bearss, Robert K. Krick, and John Hennessy. For information, contact Jerry L. Russell, the Institute's national chairman, at P.O. Box 7388, Little Rock, Arkansas 72217, 501-225-3996.

BATTLEFIELD PRESERVATION

☆ UPDATE ☆

by Mary Munsell Abroe

Work of Shenandoah Valley Preservation Commission is Underway: As reported in the February/March 1998 edition of *Civil War News*, the new Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Historic District Commission met for the first time in mid-November 1997. (See "Battlefield Preservation Update" in the November 1997 issue of this newsletter for background information.) The commission's mandate is to devise a preservation plan for ten battlefields in a region where rapid growth and development pressures complicate any effort to protect vulnerable historical resources effectively; the targeted fields are Fisher's Hill, Cedar Creek, Kernstown, Second and Third Winchester, Toms Brook, New Market, Port Republic, Cross Keys, and McDowell. The fact that the ten sites necessarily involve government at various levels plus private owners and a number of preservation groups poses an additional challenge. Several factors, including the sites' dispersed nature and a "willing seller only" condition for land acquisition prompted the National Park Service (NPS) to oppose the establishment of a new national (battlefield) park in the Shenandoah Valley. Thus the creation of a "national historic district" encompassing these fields of the 1862 and 1864 Valley campaigns emerged as a more politically viable alternative.

A funding proposal for the commission's work stands at \$200,000, with an additional \$240,000 requested from the Park Service for technical assistance. Commissioners also articulated their desire that part of the \$285 million in Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) recently allotted to the Interior Department for conservation projects be made accessible for battlefield preservation in the Shenandoah Valley. (See "Battlefield Preservation Update" in the October 1997 and January 1998 editions of this newsletter for background on LWCF and its potential as a preservation medium.)

Chancellorsville's Plight Suggests Battlefield for Doubtful "Honor": The NPS and the nonprofit Central Virginia Battlefields Trust recently nominated Chancellorsville for designation by the National Trust for Historic Preservation as one of the nation's most threatened historic sites, a listing that will be released in June. The Fredericksburg and Spotsylvania County Battlefields Memorial National Military Park, which encompasses Chancellorsville and three other fields, is one of the largest Civil War parks, holding over 8,000 acres; it is also the site of more than 30,000 casualties. The history of the Civil War park network and the manner in which it has evolved, however, translates to the fact that parcels of land highly important to chronicling the stories of battle action remain outside park boundaries and are at risk from potential development. Acting Superintendent John Hennessy of Fredericksburg, for example, recently indicated that the ground on which Stonewall Jackson's flank march occurred remains in private hands and thus is subject to development in the late 1990s. When the park was founded in 1927, the approach of Congress and the Park Service to battlefield preservation was based upon limited land acquisition

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☞ FEBRUARY MEETING ☞

by Larry Gibbs

On February 13, at the 568th regular meeting of The Civil War Round Table of Chicago, D. Scott Hartwig spoke on "The Face of the Battle: The 69th Pennsylvania Infantry at Gettysburg, July 3, 1863," before 95 members and guests. Hartwig, presently supervisory park historian at Gettysburg National Military Park, is the author of several books, including *A Killer Angels Companion* (1996). His splendid presentation concentrated on the heroic battle performance of one regiment on one day of the battle.

Hartwig began, "The purpose of the infantry during the Civil War was to seize key terrain after an enemy retreat and to maintain an advantageous position." This analysis explained Confederate General Robert E. Lee's need to attempt the courageous Pettigrew-Trimble-Pickett charge on July 3, 1863, at Gettysburg. However, Hartwig concentrated on the motivation of the 69th Pennsylvania at the "angle" on Cemetery Ridge.

"According to the muster books, only 258 men in the 69th Pennsylvania remained with the regiment out of the original 1,048 who enlisted in Philadelphia. Before Gettysburg, almost 800 were lost due to disease, orderly duty, battle casualties, or desertion," claimed Hartwig. Coming from the Irish working class as many of these men did, Hartwig hypothesized that since most workers had no pension, some of these men enlisted for the security of a pension from the U.S. government.

On the morning of July 3, the 69th regiment was positioned on Cemetery Ridge in front of the "clump of trees," the primary focal point of the Confederate attack. Firing erupted on Culp's Hill at 7 a.m. Two federal caissons exploded in the vicinity of the 69th Pennsylvania, causing major concern. Around 11:30, an unusual stillness spread over the entire battlefield for almost an hour. The stench of death from the previous day's fighting contributed to the merciless heat of 91°. The 69th had completed a march of several days; lice infected every soldier. Only a small amount of water was available for drinking and black powder from putting minie balls into the rifles stained the soldiers' mouths and teeth.

At 1 p.m., General Robert E. Lee ordered the greatest cannonade in North American history to begin. Most of the bombardment went over the heads of the 69th, but not all missed their marks. The 150 Rebel cannons created a tremendous thunderburst of exploding shells and fragments, clouding the entire battlefield with acrid smoke.

Hartwig asked, "Why didn't the troops of the 69th Pennsylvania try to run when they saw the three divisions of Confederate Generals Pickett, Pettigrew, and Trimble aim directly at them?" His answer was that these soldiers were well-disciplined and battle-hardened by this stage of the conflict. They were supported by Union artillery, positioned in back of them. Furthermore, the members of this Pennsylvania regiment felt that they were defending their native soil. Even though most came from Ireland, they were now Americans.

When the Rebels came to the Emmitsburg Road, they were ordered to rush the Union lines as fast as possible. Since the 69th Pennsylvania was placed in a vulnerable position, this part of the line could be attacked

from the front or the side. With the din of noise from the furious firing and fighting, three companies of the regiment changed formation in the midst of the fighting to meet Brigadier General Lewis Armistead and some of his men in a face-to-face fashion. These three companies accomplished this maneuver perfectly to blunt the advance of these Confederates—all of whom, including Armistead, were shot.

The 69th Pennsylvania had survived some of the most brutal action of any Civil War battle, on Cemetery Ridge, on that fateful day. Of the 258 in the regiment before the battle, the losses at Gettysburg included 32 dead, 4 dying, 71 wounded, 18 Confederate prisoners of war, and 18 unaccounted. The 69th lost about 50% of their force in about 15 minutes of action, much of it in hand-to-hand fighting. Ironically, none of men of the 69th Pennsylvania won a Medal of Honor; but each surviving soldier realized his tremendous achievement fighting for the Union on that one day of the Battle of Gettysburg.

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MARK BRADLEY (continued from page 1)
 negotiations at the James Bennett farmhouse near Durham. The working title is *The Astounding Close: The Road to Bennett Place*, and it will be published by the University of North Carolina Press.

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(Battlefield Preservation Update (from page 3)
 and the expectation that isolated, rural battlefields would remain so.

Quoted in the February/March issue of *Civil War News*, Hennessy specified the nature of modern perils to Chancellorsville: "Chancellorsville is not threatened by a mall or a major individual development. Rather, it is being consumed by increments—threatened by traffic and roads on its interior, and development on its boundaries—and the pressure to continue a pattern of preservation-unfriendly decisions is growing." Those who nominated Chancellorsville for listing as one of the National Trust's most endangered sites hope that the publicity so generated might serve as a wake-up call to area residents, government bodies, and the preservation community and move those involved to effective action. Other Civil War areas named to the list in the past include Gettysburg, Brandy Station, and sites related to the Vicksburg campaign.

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Former President Barbara Hughett addressed the Women Marines Association, Blanche S. Osborne Chapter, at their luncheon meeting at the Como Inn on February 21. Her topic was "The Marines in the Civil War."

Gene Holland is looking for a traveling companion to drive to the 1998 battlefield tour to Carolina, and share driving responsibilities. He is taking a somewhat circuitous route, stopping at additional battlefields along the way, leaving on April 24. For additional information, call Gene, or talk to Tour Chair Charles Bednar after the March meeting.

Founding member Ralph G. Newman continues to recuperate from his recent illness. Cards and messages can be sent to his home, 175 East Delaware Place, Chicago, Illinois 60611.

The New Books

Compiled by C. Robert Douglas



- Bowley, Freeman S. *A Boy Lieutenant: Memoirs of Lt. Freeman S. Bowley, Co H, 30th U. S. Colored Troops.* Sergeant Kirkland's Museum and Historical Society, Inc. Pbk. \$19.95.
- Brennan, Patrick. *Secessionville—Assault on Charleston.* Savas Publ. Co. 1996. \$29.95.
- Brewer, James D. *The Raiders of 1862.* Greenwood Publishing. 1997. \$39.95.
- Brooks, Thomas W. and Jones, Michael D. *Lee's Foreign Legion: A History of the 10th Louisiana Infantry.* Tom Brooks, 139 Pratt Crescent, Gravenhurst, Ontario, Canada PIP 1P5. 1995. \$25.00.
- Buell, Thomas B. *The Warrior Generals — Combat Leadership in the Civil War.* Crown Publishers. 1997. \$35.00.
- Campbell, Edward D. C., Jr. and Rice, Kym S., ed. *A Woman's War: Southern Women, Civil War and the Confederate Legacy.* U. of Virginia Press. 1997. \$24.95.

Former President Brooks Davis is leading a tour to "Lincoln Country" on May 8-11 for Cathedral Arts. Sites visited will include the Lincoln College Museum, all of the historic sites in Springfield, a meeting with Cullom Davis, the director and editor of the *Lincoln Legal Papers*, and a visit to New Salem. The cost, which includes two nights at a hotel and two dinners, is \$330, or \$395 for a single room. For information, call Brooks at 312-944-5082.

The Seventeenth Annual Midwest Civil War Round Table Conference is now scheduled for April 24-26 in Fort Wayne. Speakers include James I. (Bud) Robertson, John Hubbell, Gerry Prokoplówicz, Alan Gaff, Richard W. Hatcher III, and Stacy Allen. The \$100 registration fee includes two dinners and one lunch. An optional tour of The Lincoln Museum is included. For information, call 219-420-1100.

Former President Marshall Krolick and Trustee Frank Patton, president of the Union League Club Civil War Round Table, will address the luncheon meeting of the Union League Club Civil War Round Table on Manday, March 23. They will continue their discussion of "Grant at Chattanooga." A reception begins at the Union League Club at 11:30 a.m.; luncheon is served at noon. The cost is \$15 per person. For reservations, call 312-435-5000.

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.

March 13: Mark Bradley on "The Battle of Bentonville"
April 17: Keith Rocco on "Civil War Art" (**This is the THIRD Friday**)

April 29-May 3: Annual Battlefield Tour, "Western Armies in the Carolina Campaign"

May 8: Nathaniel Cheairs Hughes on "Writing Civil War History"

June 12: John Michael Priest on "Pickett's Charge"

NEW MEMBERS

Jennifer C. Bohrnstedt, 69 Outlook Circle, Pacifica, CA 94044, 650-738-1220

John Coverick, 12256 S. May Street, Chicago, IL 60643, 773-995-1699

Robert Johnson, 2333 N. Geneva Terrace, Chicago, IL 60614, 773-935-5119

NOMINATING COMMITTEE MEETING

Nominating Committee Chair Larry Gibbs has announced that the Committee will have its annual meeting on Wednesday, March 18, at 7:30 p.m., at the home of former President Carole Cierniak, 8417 W. Johanna, Niles. *The Nominating Committee is comprised of all former Round Table presidents who are currently active members*, as laid out in The Round Table's By-laws. If you have any questions, contact Larry at 708-957-4662.

Please Note: Chairman Gibbs sent out a notice which was incorrectly addressed to "Dear Executive Committee Member." *The Executive Committee and the Nominating Committee are two different committees.* While former presidents are also members of the Executive Committee, many members of the Executive Committee are not on the Nominating Committee. We apologize to any members of the Executive Committee who are not members of the Nominating Committee who may have received the notice; please disregard it.

President Robert Girardi and Ted Karamanski, our November speaker, are among the presenters at a series of lectures to be given at the Chicago Historical Society every Tuesday in March, from 5:30-7:30 p.m. The lectures are part of a training program for volunteer interpreters at the Society, and explore the social and political themes of the "House Divided" exhibit; however, a limited number of the public can attend, free of charge. For information about the lectures and the volunteer program, call 312-642-4600, extension 345.

Jerry L. Russell recently received the **Texas Star Award** of the Texas Civil War Preservation Seminar, for his "tireless, unswerving, and selfless devotion to our nation's hallowed Civil War heritage."