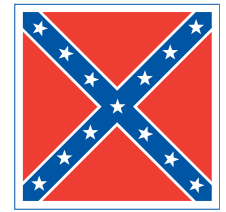


THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

Founded December 3, 1940



Volume LXVI, Number 10

Chicago, Illinois

June, 2006



652nd REGULAR MEETING

GEORGE RABLE
ON

FREDERICKSBURG IN
THE LARGER CIVIL
WAR UNIVERSE

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Friday, June 9

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

HOLIDAY INN MART PLAZA
350 NORTH ORLEANS STREET

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

\$30 - Members/Non-members

Entrée:

London Broil,
Catch of the Day,
Vegetarian Plate
or Fruit Plate

PLEASE NOTE

Make your reservation by **MONDAY, June 5**, by calling 630-460-1865. We now also have our online dinner reservation system at <http://www.thecwrt.org/commiss.htm>. Reservations made after Wednesday, June 7, will be surcharged \$5.

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.

We are offering the option of choosing not to have dinner and coming only for the address at 7:30 p.m., for a charge of \$5 per person.

Parking at the Holiday Inn is \$8 with a validated parking sticker.

GEORGE RABLE

- on -

“Fredericksburg in the Larger Civil War Universe”

BY BRUCE ALLARDICE

The battle of Fredericksburg (Dec. 13, 1862) capped off perhaps the lowest point in the fortunes of the Army of the Potomac. Under Ambrose Burnside’s erratic command, the Union army launched repeated ill-conceived and bloodily repulsed attacks against an impregnable Confederate position, handing Robert E. Lee’s Confederate army perhaps its easiest victory.

On June 9th George C. Rable will examine the battle of Fredericksburg in the widest possible context. Why has this major battle been relatively neglected by historians? Why does Fredericksburg deserve more attention? Professor Rable will answer these questions by examining the political context of the battle, by assessing some key strategic and tactical decisions, but also by looking at the

experiences of the common soldier and especially by arguing that the aftermath of any battle is just as important as the battle itself. In many ways, Fredericksburg was a Confederate victory but a Union



George Rable

story, and therefore the talk will examine how the Army of the Potomac proved so resilient after a horrific defeat.

George C. Rable earned his M.A. and Ph.D. from Louisiana State University, studying under famed Professor T. Harry Williams. Since 1998 he’s been the Charles G. Summersell Chair in Southern History, University of Alabama. Professor Rable is currently President of the Society of Civil War Historians. Among his published books is *Fredericksburg!* (Chapel Hill:

University of North Carolina Press, 2002), a History Book Club Selection which won the Douglas Southall Freeman History Award, and *The Confederate Republic: A Revolution Against Politics* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994). His current project is a book tentatively titled, “A Religious History of the American Civil War”.



Battlefield Preservation Update

BY MARY MUNSELL ABROE

Bearss Award Goes to Camp Wildcat Preservation Foundation and Richmond Battlefields Association: During the recent CWRT Manassas-Mosby tour, Ed Bearss announced his choices as co-winners of the fifth annual Edwin C. Bearss Preservation Award: the Camp Wildcat (Kentucky) Preservation Foundation and the Richmond Battlefields Association. This year our contributors' generosity, a sign of abiding respect and affection for Ed, has provided us with funding for these two awardees—at a figure of \$1,500 each from our Battlefield Preservation Fund rather than the \$1,000 prize for one organization/project designated by the CWRT executive committee at the award's inception in 2001.

When informed of the honor, James Cass of the Camp Wildcat group stated that "we're so excited about it. We'll certainly put the money to good use." He indicated the foundation's intent to use its financial award to build a new trail on its property this summer. Julie Krick, president of the RBA Board of Directors, said of the award funding that "we're thrilled to have it." According to Ms. Krick, her organization will use its award for debt service on its Glendale property. Congratulations to these two fine organizations—and thank you from the membership of the Civil War Round Table of Chicago and preservationists everywhere for jobs well done!

(For additional information on our 2006 awardees, see the following Web sites: www.campwildcatpreservation-foundation.org and www.saverichmondbattlefields.org)

BPF Committee Will Meet on Friday, June 9: There will be a meeting of the Battlefield Preservation Fund Committee at 4:30 P.M. on Friday, June 9. The meeting will be held in our regular dinner-meeting venue at the Holiday Inn Mart Plaza. Members in good standing of the CWRT are invited to attend.

The BPF Committee welcomes suggestions concerning preservation

groups and projects that might use our support. Committee members are Mary Abroe, Jerry Allen, Nancy Bates, Larry Gibbs, Rob Girardi, Jerome Kowalski, Marshall Krolick, Bob Miller, Steve Stewart, and David Zucker.

CWRT Receives Thanks for Donations: The Civil War Round Table has received notes of gratitude from several preservation organizations to which we contributed recently. From Elle Kelley, membership coordinator of the Friends of the National Parks at Gettysburg, came the following regarding our December 2005 donation honoring Frank Pettice's devoted service to the Civil War Round Table's preservation efforts: "Thank you for your \$695.00 in memory of Mr. A. Frank Pettice. On behalf of the Friends of the National Parks at Gettysburg, we are sincerely sorry for your loss and are honored to help keep his memory alive by continuing to preserve his passion for Gettysburg.

The generosity of our Friends nationwide continues to enable us to preserve this battlefield and the lessons of honor, courage, and sacrifice endowed here in 1863. Our responsibility to future generations and our commitment to past generations are fulfilled through the generous support and efforts of individuals like Mr. Pettice." [The \$695 to which Ms. Kelley referred included \$500 from the CWRT Battlefield Preservation Fund and \$195 in cash donations from Frank's friends and family which, at Mrs. Pettice's request, we passed along with our group donation.]

Mike Stevens, president of the Central Virginia Battlefields Trust, expressed his organization's thanks for our gift in memory of past president and battlefield tour enthusiast Don Anderson: "The Central Virginia Battlefields Trust wishes to extend to you its sincerest thanks and appreciation for your recent donation of \$500.00, in memory of your past president, Mr. Donald Anderson. It is the generosity of persons such as you that

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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, 9670 N. Dee #205 Des Plaines, Illinois 60016, or contact webmaster@www.thecivilwar.org.

inspires us in our efforts to save hallowed ground.

We are very pleased to announce that thanks to the Civil War Preservation Trust, Tricord Homes, and the Spotsylvania (County) Board of Supervisors, 140 acres of the Day One Chancellorsville battlefield have been saved. CVBT is honored to have been a part of this preservation effort, from early 2003 (when a coalition of concerned citizens helped to block the construction of 2,000 homes in the area) right through to the present time. Because of you and your support for preservation, this ground...will be there for you, your children, and all future generations....

The Trust is also positioned to save 16.37 acres of land on a portion of the Talley Farm ridge, just south of the old Orange Turnpike (State Route 3). This land is part of the May 1863 Jackson Flank Attack area. Because of a closing deadline, two of the Trust's Board members stepped forward and acquired the property in March 2004, under an agreement to sell the land to the Trust at a later date. The Trust's delay in purchasing the property arose from the possible opportunity to receive a \$150,000 grant. As a condition of that grant, the Trust must raise \$50,000 in matching funds. Your support will help us as we strive to meet this recent fundraising challenge. [Emphasis mine]

MAY MEETING

BY LARRY GIBBS

On May 12th **Mark Noll** presented “How the Bible Helped Start the Civil War” in front of 76 members and guests at the 651st regular meeting of The Civil War Round Table of Chicago. A professor of Christian Thought and History at Wheaton College, Noll has authored 35 books, including his latest, *The Civil War as a Theological Crisis* (UNC Press, 2006). His speech concentrated on why the Bible was so controversial—and important—during Civil War times.

“Many sources from the Bible support slavery,” asserted Noll. “The controversy over biblical verses split the Union in 1861!” In reading sermons delivered prior to the war, Noll was impressed with the strong feeling in northern churches asserting support for slavery, or at least, that nothing in the Bible prohibited slavery. Clergymen differed intensely over the issue. Henry Ward Beecher, the brother of Harriet Beecher Stowe, author of *Uncle Tom’s Cabin*, exclaimed that “the most fertile cause of sin was slavery!” James Thornwell, a southern minister, stated that “slavery was a good and merciful way to organize labor!” Some clergy used the ninth chapter of Genesis to “con-sign Africa to everlasting servitude.”

The major question that Noll addressed was: Why should a debate about the Bible tear the country apart? Noll emphasized the place of religion in Civil War society, noting “Religion stood by itself compared to other aspects of (antebellum) life.” Almost all of the 400 institutions of higher learning in 1860 were run by religious bodies. The average American heard an estimated 15 sermons a year in 1840, twice as many sermons as the number of pieces of mail he received! Noll emphasized that no state church existed in the U.S.—unlike many European countries. A national culture had to promote the values of ordinary people,

and to a large extent the churches assumed that role. The population acted in a virtuous manner which meant they had to be religious. The American people trusted the U.S. Constitution to regulate civil life in the U.S. and to hold the country together.

In 1860 most churchgoers were Protestants. The Methodists, Baptists, and Presbyterians increased their membership significantly from 1790 to 1860. In the 1830s the country experienced a tremendous religious revival, and its nationwide churches helped foster national unity.

A precursor to the division of the country in 1861 occurred with the split of the three largest Protestant denominations over slavery. The Presbyterians divided into northern and southern wings in 1836-37 due to slavery, the Methodists split in 1844 and the Baptists split in 1845. The U.S. was faced with the question: Can the country stay together if the churches are divided over slavery?

Scriptural interpretation of the Bible was instrumental to American society prior to the war. The abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison stated, “If the Bible says slavery is acceptable, there is something wrong with the Bible!” Many believed that slavery was approved, or at least condoned, in the Bible. Many northerners had difficulty making good arguments against slavery. Some northern clergy argued that one shouldn’t take the Bible literally when it condoned servitude. Others expressed the view that slavery in the South was different from slavery in the Bible because no slave trade or fugitive slave law was referred to in the Bible.

Perhaps the most salient argument against the southern pro-slavery interpretation of the Bible came from a non-theologian, Abraham Lincoln. In 1850, Lincoln argued that slavery wasn’t defined by race in the Bible,

that in fact virtually all slavery in the Bible was white slavery. Conversely, slavery in the antebellum south was a method to define and segregate races for the labor force. Lincoln argued that the southern race-based slavery differed fundamentally from the slavery of biblical times. “Americans in the north did not want their leaders telling them to support slavery due to racism!”, proclaimed Noll. When Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation in 1862, he turned northern ambiguity about the morality of slavery to northern antipathy toward slavery.

In the end, how was the issue of religious morality and slavery settled? Noll concluded, “The great theologians (U.S.) Grant and (William) Sherman finally settled the issue of how the Bible interpreted slavery!”



BEARSS AWARD CONTRIBUTORS

Thanks to the following individuals who contributed to the Bearss Award fund for 2006: Mary and Mike Abroe, Chuck Adams, Jerry Allen, Gary Augustine, Nancy Bates, Marilyn and Chuck Bednar, Ted Birndorf, Kurt Carlson, Terry Carr, Carole Cierniak, Richard Cohen, Lorraine Colwell, Jim Cunningham, Gordon Dammann, Brooks Davis, Charles Falkenberg, Mary Beth Foley, Larry Gibbs, Cindy Intravartolo, Marshall Krolick, Arthur Kunis, Carole LeClaire, Janet Linhart, Mark Matranga, Richard McAdoo, Duff McGovern, Bob Miller, Jim Nethery, Fred Parker, James R. Patterson, Lyn and Gale Pewitt, Jan Rasmussen, Lola and Jose Riera, Roger Rudich, Marvin Sanderman, Robert Schell, Jerome Schur, Brian Seiter, Steven Thompson, Richard Tonelli, Donna Tuohy, Muriel Underwood, Daniel R. Weinberg, David Witcher, and Jackie Wilson.

GRAPESHOT



A change in the Salt Creek CWRT banquet June 2nd: **Gordon Dammann** (our Nevins-Freeman Award winner for 2007) will be the featured speaker, replacing Pat Brennan.

CWRT past president **Bruce Allardice** will speak to the Knoxville, Tennessee CWRT July 11th on "Jeff Davis's Colonels".

CWRT past president **Mary Abroe** was elected to the board of trustees of the Civil War Preservation Trust, Washington, D.C. and Hagerstown, Maryland, April 2006. Congrats, Mary!

Our friends at the DC CWRT are sponsoring a two-day tour of the Battle of Chickamauga this June 24th and 25th. **Ed Bearss** will be the tour leader. The cost is \$405 per person, and the registration deadline in June 8th. For more information, contact cwrtdc@verizon.net.

Thanks to **Hal Ardell**, photos of our recent battle field tour of Manassas have been posted at www.kodakgallery.com/CivilWar. Take a look!

Know of any upcoming talks, events, or publications? All members are welcome to contribute items to the newsletter. Contact the editor at bsallardice1@peoplepc.com or (847) 375-8305.

SCHIMMELFENNIG BOUTIQUE

Lapel pins, Meeting Tapes and other items are on sale at each monthly meeting, with proceeds to go to battlefield preservation. There is also a book raffle, with proceeds again going to benefit battlefield preservation.

A silent auction is held at each monthly dinner meeting, for books donated by Ralph G. Newman and other members. The minimum bid is \$5 per book, with a minimum raise of \$1 per bid. Five minutes after the conclusion of the speaker's presentation, bidding will close and the highest bid is the winner of each book. Proceeds benefit battlefield preservation.

2007 TOUR SET

Mark May 3-6, 2007 down on your calendar! The CWRT's 2007 Battlefield Tour, "War-time Washington, DC & the Booth Escape Trail", is set. We will be headquartered at the Holiday Inn in Springfield, VA. The first two days of the tour will focus on the war-time sites in D.C., including Fort Stevens, the Navy Yard Museum and the White House. Saturday we will visit Ford's Theater and track John Wilkes Booth's escape route. Sunday will include a tour of Arlington Cemetery. **Ed Bearss** and author **Michael Kauffman** ("American Brutus") will be our guides.

DOUGLAS ASSN MEETING

The Stephen A. Douglas Association will be holding its annual meeting Saturday, June 17th. Events include a 10:00 a.m. Commemoration Ceremony at the Douglas tomb, a luncheon at the Union League Club of Chicago, and a talk by Brian Lamb, CEO of C-SPAN and host of the tv show, "Booknotes".

Bulletin Board



FUTURE MEETINGS

Regular meetings are held at the Holiday Inn Mart Plaza, 350 North Orleans Street, the second Friday of each month, *unless otherwise indicated*.

June 9: **George Rable**, "Fredricksburg in the Larger Civil War Universe"

Sept. 8: **Michael Kauffman**, "American Brutus"

Oct. 13 (Nevins Freeman Address): **Dr. Gordon Dammann**, "Father of Battlefield Medicine—Dr. Jonathan Letterman"

Nov. 10: **Bob O'Neill**, "Eastern Cavalry"

Dec. 8: **Tom Chaffin**, "CSS Shenandoah, Ship of Gray"

AUTOGRAPH SHOW JUNE 11TH

The PADA (Professional Autograph Dealers Assn.) will have its autograph show Sunday, June 11th, at the Wyndham Hotel in Chicago, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Leading dealers from across the country will offer for sale thousands of original letters, documents and manuscripts signed by historical figures and famous people in all fields. For more information, phone (888) 338-4338 or visit the PADA website at www.PADAweb.org.