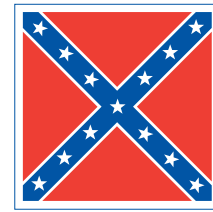


THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE

Founded December 3, 1940



Volume LXVII, Number 4

Chicago, Illinois

December, 2006

THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE



656th REGULAR MEETING

DAVID BRIDGES

ON

FIGHTING WITH JEB STUART: MAJOR JAMES BREATHED AND THE CONFEDERATE HORSE ARTILLERY

Friday, Dec. 8

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:

Sliced Striploin.

Catch of the Day.

Vegetarian Plate

or Fruit Plate

PLEASE NOTE

Make your reservation by **MONDAY, Dec. 4**, 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, Dec. 6, 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.

David Bridges

on

“Fighting with Jeb Stuart: Major James Breathed and the Confederate Horse Artillery”

BY BRUCE ALLARDICE

In the view of historian Bruce Catton, during the first years of the Civil War in Virginia the Union cavalry “were no match at all for Jeb Stuart’s incomparable troopers”. The Confederate superiority was due in large measure to Stuart’s aggressive and innovative use of “horse artillery”, the mobile batteries attached to his cavalry command. Stuart mentored a whole series of daring young officers who pushed their guns into the hottest infantry fights, winning the praise of Stonewall Jackson (a hard man to please) at battles such as Second Manassas and Fredericksburg. Among those daring young leaders was Major James Breathed.

When the Civil War began, James Breathed was a 21-year-old physician just beginning his medical career. A Virginian by birth, and raised on a plantation in Maryland, he cast his lot with the Confederacy in April 1861. By chance, he shared a seat on a train with James Ewell Brown Stuart, who encouraged Breathed to join the 1st Virginia Cavalry, a regiment commanded by Stuart. Breathed was then transferred to the newly formed Stuart Horse Artillery. For the doctor-turned-war-



David Bridges

rior, it was a perfect assignment.

Unencumbered by formal military training, Breathed developed his own unique style of command. Relentless in his efforts to defeat the enemy, he exhibited conspicuous gallantry and accomplishments on so many fields that his actions separated him from the pack of other battery commanders—inside and outside the cavalry arm.

David P. Bridges, theologian, historian, and biographer, spent nearly two decades in a professional career as a Presbyterian minister. He is a native of Wilmette, Illinois and former member of The University Club. David has an undergraduate degree in Economics from the University of Kentucky; a Master’s of Divinity from Louisville Presbyterian Seminary and post-graduate studies in

American History from the University of Chicago. David’s first book, *The Best Coal Company In All Chicago* was published in 2003 and his second book, *The Bridges of*

Washington County soon followed. He began to write about the Civil War six years ago. His book *Fighting With JEB Stuart*, has been described by historian Ed Longacre as a “detailed, balanced, well researched, and straightforward account”. Mr. Bridges is Major Breathed’s great-grandnephew.



Battlefield Preservation

BY MARY MUNSELL ABROE

BPF Committee Will Meet on December 2: The Battlefield Preservation Fund committee will hold a breakfast meeting on Saturday, December 2 at 9:30 A.M. The site is Flapjacks Restaurant, 8501 Dempster Street, Niles. Civil War Round Table members in good standing may attend; each attendee is responsible for his/her meal. If you plan to attend, please contact Rob Girardi (CVL-WARGUY@AOL.COM) or Mary Abroe (DrMJMAbroe@cs.com) so that arrangements can be made with the restaurant.

December Meeting Is Final Chance to Donate to Margie Bearss Memorial: The BPF committee has been accepting memorial contributions in honor of Margie Riddle Bearss for the Civil War Preservation Trust during the past two meetings. The Bearss family requested that commemorative gifts in Mrs. Bearss's honor go to the CWPT; Civil War Round Table members' last opportunity to donate will be at the meeting on Friday, December 8. If you would like to contribute and are unable to attend, please send your gift to Mary Abroe, 212 Woodbine Avenue, Wilmette, Illinois 60091-3332; make the check out to "Battlefield Preservation Fund/CWRT" and write "Margie Bearss Memorial" on the "Memo" line.

Recent BPF Expenditure Renews KBA Membership: In September the BPF committee authorized a \$250 membership renewal for the Civil War Round Table in the Kernstown Battlefield Association. We received the following acknowledgment from that organization: "Thank you for your recent donation to the KBA. Your financial support is vital as we move forward with our mission to acquire, maintain, and interpret the Kernstown Battlefield." In 2003 the KBA received our 2nd Annual Ed Bearss Preservation Award.

Slaughter Pen Receives \$2-Million Federal Grant: In mid-October Secretary of the Interior Dick Kempthorne announced that

the Civil War Preservation Trust would receive \$2 million in federal matching funds to assist in acquisition of the Slaughter Pen Farm at Fredericksburg. CWPT's ongoing crusade to save Slaughter Pen (with its \$12-million price tag) is the costliest private-sector battlefield preservation project in American history. A collaborative effort involving CWPT, local developer Tricord, Inc., Sun Trust Bank, and the Central Virginia Battlefields Trust (recipient of our 1st Annual Ed Bearss Preservation Award) allowed CWPT to buy the 208-acre tract earlier this year. The \$2-million grant announced by Secretary Kempthorne is essential to the successful conclusion of the current fund-raising effort. According to Trust president Jim Lighthizer, "Although we need to raise millions more to pay off the property, this federal grant is a crucial component in our campaign. Without it, we would simply be unable to meet our \$12-million goal."

The criteria upon which the Interior Department based its \$2-million grant were Slaughter Pen's historical significance and the availability of monies from the Land and Water Conservation Fund. [The Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1964 provided that entrance and user fees from national recreation areas as well as revenues received from the sale of surplus federal properties could be used by the National Park Service and other federal agencies for land acquisition; a 1968 amendment allowed receipts from the sale of oil and gas leases on the continental shelf to augment the fund.] While this grant for Slaughter Pen comes from a federal source, such funding must be used to help with non-federal Civil War battlefield preservation projects. The American Battlefield Protection Program, a function of the NPS, manages the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

THE CIVIL WAR ROUND TABLE



Founded December 3, 1940
9670 N. Dee #205
Des Plaines, Illinois 60016
Phone: 630-460-1865
www.thecwrt.org

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.

Also in attendance at the October news conference that featured Secretary Kempthorne and Lighthizer were two Virginia state lawmakers, Speaker of the House of Delegates Bill Howell and Senator Ed Houck. Both are preservation advocates who backed the establishment of Virginia's new Civil War Historic Site Preservation Fund last spring. Speaker Howell remarked that saving such properties as Slaughter Pen was the legislature's intent when it initiated the fund earlier this year; it is anticipated that Virginia indeed will set aside monies from that new source to support the Slaughter Pen acquisition.

The Chicago Civil War Round Table's executive committee authorized a \$1,000 contribution to the CWPT to honor Dr. James McPherson, a Pulitzer-Prize winning Civil War author/scholar and ardent preservationist, when he spoke at our February 2006 meeting. That gift, in turn, went to the Slaughter Pen Farm campaign, one of the first such donations from a Civil War round table. This is a fine beginning, but it is just that: a beginning. We can and should do more to help preserve these most important remnants of that defining struggle, or our pride in being the Civil War Round Table rings hollow.

NOVEMBER MEETING

BY LARRY GIBBS

On November 10th, Bob O'Neill gave an informative speech entitled "Learning to Lead: P.S.G. Cooke, John Buford, Wesley Merritt, Alfred Pleasonton, and George Custer". Sixty-five members and guest enjoyed this presentation at the 655th regular meeting of The Civil War Round Table of Chicago. O'Neill is a former police detective who now resides in Montana. An expert on the Union view of the guerilla war in northern Virginia, his speech dealt with the tactics and personalities of the Union cavalry leadership.

The study of cavalry at West Point started only in 1839, when riding began to be taught. In the 1850s then superintendent Robert E. Lee added cavalry tactics to the curriculum. In 1859 Colonel Philip St George Cooke revised the whole system of cavalry operations. Prior to 1861, two theories on the use of cavalry had evolved. In one school of thought, Indians were considered more dangerous than cavalymen. Under this school of thought, the U.S. cavalry had to emphasize dismounted, defensive fighting. Cooke subscribed to the other line of thinking, which claimed that cavalry were more effective and dangerous on the offensive, utilizing a dramatic, furious mounted assault. With this tactic the cavalry tactics had the troopers using revolvers and sabers—especially sabers—to frighten the enemy. The speed of the attack would surprise the enemy. Opined O'Neill, "Cooke's love of the charge eventually hurt the nation".

Early in the Civil War the

Union cavalry was inexperienced and not taken seriously by either their own high command or the Confederates. O'Neill explained, "The key question is when and how Union cavalry can be a serious adjunct [to the artillery and infantry]". P.S.G. Cooke was largely unknown to the public, but he succeeded where others failed with the establishment of the Union cavalry. Cooke gained fame with the sobriquet, "father of cavalry in the west."

Colonel Cooke's care for his horses and his soldiers set the standard for his subordinates. One of his main supporters was Wesley Merritt. Opposed to fighting on foot, Merritt believed that cavalry tactics should reflect the values of the terrain being fought for.

The reputation of Cooke and his tactics of the full throttle attack was severely tested at the Battle of Gaines Mill (June 27, 1862). Cooke's cavalry brigade was ordered to attack advancing Confederate infantry in order to relieve pressure on the Union infantry. Confusion of orders dissipated the shock value of the mounted charge, and a deadly Confederate volley broke up the assault. The failure of this all-out attack caused a reevaluation of cavalry tactics. Blamed for the debacle, Cooke was dismissed from his position.

Cavalry tactics emphasizing a saber charge on horseback gradually changed to tactics emphasizing dismounted carbine fire, with horses used mainly for movement to and from the battlefield. Under these tactics, the cavalry would dismount, and one in four troopers would hold the horses. The other three would

fight on foot, using carbines, not revolvers with their short range. This tactic allowed for good mobility with increased firepower.

At first, young cavalry officers had a difficult choice of which tactical plan to adopt. Eventually, the dismounted fighting school won out. In 1895, Cooke died. His strongest supporter, Wesley Merritt, declared that "Cooke would stand highest of all Civil War commanders." However, O'Neill stated, "Tragically Cooke's name is but a footnote in history," remembered if at all for his lack of innovation. Concluded O'Neill, "In the case of Philip St. George Cooke, it is usually easier to see faults in others than in ourselves."

Thank You

President Nancy Bates received the following thank-you letter from our Nevins-Freeman Award winner, Gordon Dammann:

"I wish to thank you and the great Chicago Civil War Round Table for a fabulous evening. Karen and I and our friends had a super time. I am still humbled by the Nevins-Freeman Award. Please convey my thanks to all my friends at your next meeting. Reminder—"Save the battlefields.""

Correction—in the last newsletter, Paula Walker was mistakenly listed as being a member of the Hospitality Committee.

GRAPESHOT



On November 11th, Veteran's Day, Rosehill Cemetery in Chicago hosted a ceremony honoring the veterans of America's wars. Participants included CWRT past president **Jerry Kowalski** and various reenactment groups representing veterans of America's wars.

David Bridges, our December speaker, will be giving his talk on "Fighting with JEB Stuart" at the Dec. 7th get together of the Blue Island Park District CWRT. For more information, phone (708) 385-3304 or log on to www.blueislandparks.org.

Bruce Allardice will be speaking on "Why the North Won the Civil War" at the Houston Texas CWRT on December 22nd.

Larry Gibbs will be speaking on "The Causes of the Civil War" at the Friday, December 1st meeting of the Northern Illinois CWRT. The meeting is at 7:30 p.m. at the Arlington Heights Public Library.

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.

CWRT TOUR 2007

War-time Washington, DC & the Booth Escape Trail
May 2-6, 2007

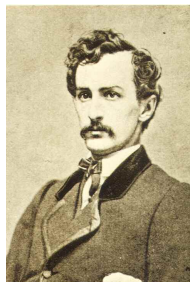
THURSDAY, begin at Old Fort Washington, then on to Forts Foote, Stevens, DeRussy, and Ward. Also Walter Reed Museum, and Battlefield Cemetery.

FRIDAY, to Lafayette Square, Mt. Olivet Cemetery, "Old Soldiers' Home," Grant's Monument, Lincoln Memorial, Congressional Cemetery, Navy Yard Museum.

SATURDAY, Booth escape trail starts at Ford's Theater, Peterson House, Surratt's Tavern, Dr. Mudd's, Pine Woods thicket, Loyola Retreat area, Stewart's home, Port Royal, and ends at Garrett Farm.

SUNDAY, Arlington Cemetery, Arlington House, and Tomb of the Unknowns.

Base hotel: Holiday Inn-Express, Springfield, VA, near Reagan Airport. Registration forms will be in the next NEWSLETTER.



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*.

Dec. 8: **David Bridges**, "Fighting with Jeb Stuart: Major James Breathed and the Confederate Horse Artillery"

Jan. 12, 2007: **Kurt Carlson**, "Chicago During the Civil War"

Feb. 9: **Dan Paterson**, "A Longstreet Pictorial History"

March 9: **Pete Cozzens**, "The Valley Campaign"

April 13: **Robert E. L. Krick**, Topic to be determined

May 11: **Rebecca Cumins**, "Battlefield Preservation"

June 9: **John Coski**, "The Confederate Battle Flag"

Book Signing Event at Abraham Lincoln Bookshop

On Saturday, December 2, at 11 a.m., the Abraham Lincoln Bookshop will feature an in-house and a virtual book signing by historians Gabor Boritt (*The Gettysburg Gospel: The Lincoln Speech That Nobody Knows*) and Douglas Wilson (*Lincoln's Sword: The Presidency and the Power of Words*). For reservations and more information, visit www.ALincolnBookShop.com or phone (312) 944-3085.